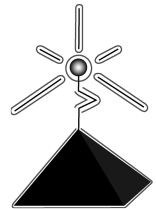


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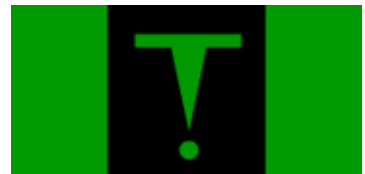
VILUME

On W.M. Dimes



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“Disgust, Design, Deconstruct.”

Foreword

do you have any questions?

how do you figure out if i get better?

we're here in this. this is the life... you're supposed to help me help you through this. i'm a doctor.

i wasn't confused as to whether or not you were a doctor. i'm just worried-

now you signed the form which allows us to keep you for a three day period to assess if you are a danger to yourself or others. if at which time we decide you pose a threat we can return to it and figure out what we can do.

which leads us back to the question i just asked. it seems kind of threatening.

why do you feel threatened? i'm a doctor.

for a minute i didn't think you were a doctor. it's good that you said that to me.

i've heard that you have been asking for paper. what's it for?

i'm working on something big. am i allowed to do that?

if it helps you. do you mind if i looked at it?

would you.

what?

nothing, what? are you a doctor or something?

i'm a doctor. this is a case study.

this is the best. this is the funniest thing. and back to the thing the case study part brings me back to what i was-

we don't encourage creative work before bed time. so i've asked one of the nurses to come and read to you. it will keep your mind active in a narrower way. i think that will help.

what is it?

it's a story i think you might enjoy it. it's weird, like you.

i don't think i'm as weird as you'd like me to be. that's one of the things-

don't worry. i'm a doctor. this is a case study.

yeah, could you help me with that? i'm not clear about what the case study-

we're professionals here. you don't have to worry. you're safe here. this is the life.

well i know, i wouldn't have checked myself in if i didn't think you knew what you were doing.

you can stop telling me why i'm here. and you can stop cutting me off because it's so annoying, right.

we don't use words like that here.

i think you must use them sometimes. like in the washroom. like when you take a seven hour shit.

that sort of imagery isn't necessary here. you don't need to talk like that to me.

no, i think i do. i think i know how to talk to people.

before we call it a night i need to ask you a few questions.

you don't want to talk about the thing i just said? it's pretty hilarious.

just a few questions and then the nurse will come in and read before lights out.

that's great; i love talking to people. i'm so good at it.

“I just answered your question with another question. “

- *Spiderjaw Slagg*

It's Personal (Intro)
(Self Destruction, Nihilism, and Absurdism)

My Dog grants me peripheral vision
There's skyscrapers with rifles at my back
My mentor's away; doabout gone fishin'
My Dog comes back with a thunderclap

I found new home underneath the bridge
My Dog sits silly at my side
Nine pounds of bones inside a fridge
I hope it'll come to life in time

A man that confizzed the blanket of art
Warned us not to mess with this shit
Flip through bandanas in a shopping cart
Need a thinking cap to fight it with

Back then they said that dogs can't laugh
Well I guess I'm done; I finally x
My wisdom teeth won't take me back
And I don't have the parts for a heart attack

My Dog, it said "don't ask no questions"
I mean that's great cause I can't use lies
He stared off into heaving dark
And exhaled with his breathing part

My real pet flung out of never
So two misfits could sit together
A fridge that worries with a guy that hurries
To juxtaposition of stormy weathers

My Dog granted me right to attorney
To defend me during fights on my turning
He said "Use it well, he'll be there, in favour."
In times like this he catalyts faster than paper

The main of Gomorrah wants to see me quick
She's like sand, like smoke leaking from a fist

Well she'll never get it buried under all of this
My love, my pain, my Dog and fridge.

One time, there were two warm cups of coffee sitting on a table made out of it doesn't matter what it was made of. At opposite poles of the table sat two figures dressed strictly in suits, grey ties, and orange shirts. Their hair was slicked back thick like they used Vaseline, like they *didn't give a shit*, like they were a couple of punks. The topic which they met to orbit about was The Slave, and what was to be done about it comma him semicolon the disappearance of, maybe. When they patted it down, as if were about to leap off their *fucking scalps*, their hands were in white gloves, casting the stone of doubt and asking whether maybe, *just maybe*, the gloves were more pressing.¹

Laterally viewed, the meeting fell comfortably into the rhythms of the Slave's entire existence, where important decisions made about it were decided over by shadowy figures, secret governments, and other various mysterious creatures. The living of his life was enough a comment regarding what they were trying to accomplish.

They talked about him as if he were in the room, glancing over their shoulders and paying close attention to movement in their peripheral visions.

This was because that, no matter how much power they wielded, and no matter how far they got from anything, everything was a part of it, and that being the case, at any given time, anyone could be listening, and that being the case, at any given moment, they could be brought down. Strange spheres passed by in the distance.

There were birds walking on the ground, pecking at oxygen tanks that lay on their sides.

"He's not here," one of them said. It doesn't matter which one.

"We never used to talk like this," the other man said. "We never used to talk... *like this!*"

"We changed things. My children were supposed to change things after I'm gone. I shouldn't have to see things change twice. Nobody can do that. I don't know what these people expect."

"It's like burying your children, sort of."

"It's like watching someone who is in your body bury your children."

"That's horrifying."

"I am aware it's horrifying."

They drank some of their coffee. Two, maybe three sips, but no more than three.

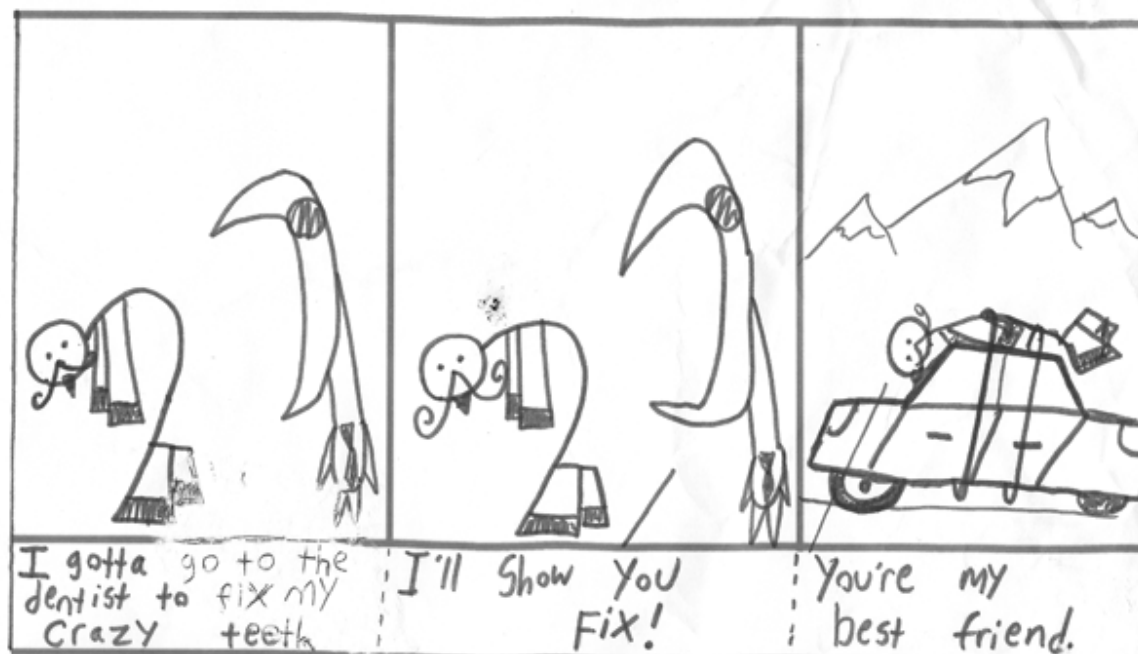
"When did we become so funny?"

"I don't know. My lips feel dirty."

"Remember that. Remember how it tastes. That's where we live."

"I hate being funny."

¹ Written with the adult in mind.



Human Error By: Wicked Strips



WHISKY
PAGE
WHISKY
PAGE

That's Plato

In the washroom
You turn off the lights
Something on your back
That's Plato

Something's in the pool
That was just your life
In a buzzard's lap
That's Plato

A chess piece assembles
From drops of water
Bishop by the table
That's Plato

Something in the corner
Something in the floor
It's behind the door
That's Plato

So tall, so smooth
Such a smart cocoon
The diagonal moves
That's Plato

The piano's gone
Something's terribly wrong
You don't know this song
That's Plato

Pulling out the sword
This is not a war
An ordinary chore
That's Plato

It is left, then right
Like hands that slap
You should just relax
That's Plato

**Danger Channel
Or
Personality Cult**

Hen pox, dreadlocks
Beating up numbers
The World Scientist
Is throwing viles into piles

I saw them in a drink
It's plural in action
Their makeup made me think
About their ethical inaction

They took our numbers from the table
And waved it in the faces of those unphasable
To touch their castles; understand those assholes
They ride the laws that make us famous
Deal in threes, the fame; personality cult

Our minds are the prize they plural for
They muse us; pollute what we came here for
The numbers became dented in their prints
They kicked the clock what bit their shins

In my drink they chewed
They licked; tried to talk
Tried to speak their mind
While swimming in wine

I learned they work like sweat
And photosynthesize us
In recycling they trust

In the story of the slave they play in the back
Put their fingers to the wheel like a cake met gas
Try to drive we the people from their fallitical homes
Hype the theses of the shining with a pop and groan

Their work is glory
Their eyes are gory
All they see is red
Tell an angry story
This it's famous.

Shiver Shiver Multiply

The sound of the betrayer
Reminded me of a bar from the past
I was there just then, again, ho^hoooo yes
A hurricane outclassed, outdressed

My head handle became umbrella'd
I'm curved towards the floor
Seems I need to watch the cellar
Seems I can't find the door

The sun turned maroon, grim
My patience growing thin
I swing round madly, then
I hit my fucking head again

I'm shaking like a ventriloquist
I can't control my body
The thing knows how to looseleaf this
That's what I find alarming

My head'll pitch up
I laugh and yelp
I'd love the picture
To have some help
I see the future
Play through the strings
I watch existence speak
Through the thinnest things

Smoke spelled out the dynasty
The twist threatening arrives
The tunnel split, a creamery
Not one escapes alive
You look down

Brazil

Going to Brazil, where the dead men go
Gonna fashion ourselves a new pumpkin there
We hear there's stained glass tangle there
Gonna do the Redrum tango there

Gonna tip the DJ a cent twenty five
Have to tip the ferryman to retain my rhymes
Gonna drown down the swimming acrylic girls
Have to swing off the bridge at the end of the world

Gonna change the signs so that they blur
Wanna ride all the horses ride out of there
Gonna wade through the dirt and the rivers there
Wanna sell down the wisemen that silver there

Gang of Butchers (Sympathy from a Striptease)

Beware, we are / *it is* bad, bad men
We're unsplitting the repeated atom
All the good sort of disappear young
We make spasms - gambling phantoms

Gang of the damned
It's the gang of the sleeping
Check! (This army is an octopi
This candlestick is positive
It's bag it'd hard, camera on
Flash any digit you can think of)
Thick arms, dragging hands
That are six feet deep, and—
Yeaha my hate is an orchard

(The blood on your hands looks like how their origami once was)

Swing that symbol like a bottle to their towers
Angle like a nimble critical missile at their king
Check! (Her moaning is substantial, the letter T is here
Her whispers are an animal's, my wishes are a cannibal's)
Their famous first words, no match for those super powers
Take their world like sky flooding on a pig

Check! (That flag is a rag held, pounding like an geek
Some places on the oceans, like drums, are unique
Or so they say, or so I said
The hog's on the hill or so they say)

Itthey smoke ash draped in spikes
Itthey steal ambulances draped in ash
Itwe invented irony; we invented books
Itwe pulled history out of collected cash

Heroes burn just like anything
Check! (Trace the feathers off a pier
Follow your heart to somewhere cold
Follow some demons to their meetings here
Follow my lead to somewhere *—like clarity—*)
Their creatures quickdress down and scream

Their skin blossoms and their skeletons steam
And their spectacles pall like some cancelled thing

The phone rings only for you, for you
Down here the house is full of bandages
To fix your aspirations to fix your fantasies
They're broken by the gate itself

Check! (Volumes, volumes, up in my hands
I'm the president of this new world monster
My sunglasses- so thick, can't see the bat
With the gun pointed down, blind as man)

I patented the idea of the dream of the megaphone
I coined the term "*I'll see you in hell!*"
I money'd the alphabet used to bewitch the weak
I pasteurized the books used to conjure the storm
I created, I created the conqueror worm

We're numerous like a prism, long
Our faces sketch like a prison song
Check! (I got sympathy from the Striptease
All the while, beehive in mind
All the while, the familiar clock in my body
Suicide, death and death and death)

But our mouths clean enough to eat biscuits on
Our eyeballs red enough to curse upon
Check! (Babies make sounds like radios
Teens without organs relish vanilla sand
They know where to go when you check below
Back down to the bunker with my tongue in tow)
I know you know the words so sing along

Some bug with a hat is, allegedly, our savior
Goggles on the wall give us all we need to know
Check! (At night I clap my hands
In the back I sleep with fifteen rats
I pile husbands like it's the key I desire
I avoid the queen because she's more admired)
Nothing worth burning ever comes on paper
All's drawn on the cemetery in our icepick show

When lipstick turns to flesh, well *it* you're *in*
Our clique grabs at all the words, observe
The end of the day is the only place to begin
The deep end's the only real place to swim

I don't care about cash, but money's got me in mind

He pressed his palms into his eyes and held them there tightly. In the darkness of his head he began to witness spirals and kaleidoscopic shapes made out of yellow and orange and other similar warm tones. When he pulled his hands away and opened his eyes, he was temporarily blind. The blindness was framed by lines of static, or water crashing against rocks. He'd done it before and it never occurred to him that he was killing himself. It wasn't, in fact, but he didn't even think about it, because he wanted it like a dry corn husk wants a hurricane. Crashing against rocks.

He didn't stop it, and he didn't pursue it actively; he let the paranoia become him every couple of weeks. He proactively dabbled in mental illness.

The paranoia had bled into his muscle memory and turned it into a hungering, passionate thing. His body moved without him, and it was this what caused him alarm. He couldn't recall when he delegated his body to the imp of death, but he was looking into the piles of paper that were delivered to his office.

One night while recovering from temporary blindness, he began to wonder what caused one thing to bleed into the other, where his passions came from, and indeed, what drove him to do things he could not reason. He had a small, stained notepad where he recorded notes of note, and one writ curiously in red was "what else is my body doing without my permission?"

He had never felt like his own person, but lately he had begun to take stock of how other people carried on. He wasn't satisfied.

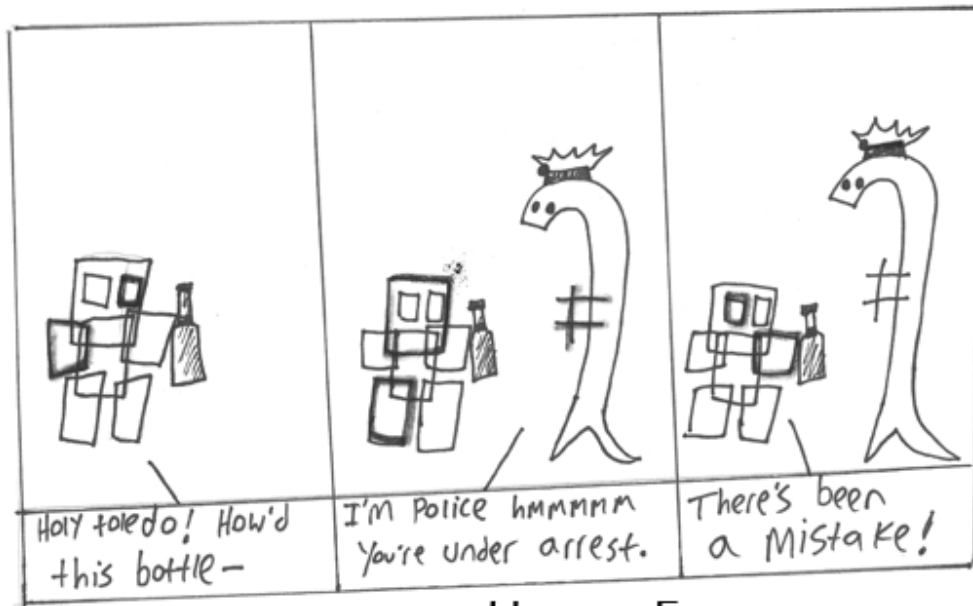
The questions he asked might not have even been his own. He tailsun into doubt and confusion. He descended from recreation to addiction.

While paranoid he felt pointed; he was addressing things as absolutes. He was in the mindset to tackle big problems.

It was theatric; he sold himself on it, which even though might also be unpermitted memory, was as universal as his parents, and had to be trusted lest he risk complete self destruction.

He could see things clearly; the lines of static faded and gave way to his miserable life. Every word that ran through his head was writ in knives. He observed that knives were omnipresent, and empirically important.²

² Then there was the bird man.



Human Error

WHISKY
HISKY
PAGE
GE



Constancy of Inevitability

Cover me in oil
Outer space is never untied
Beat upon a drum
Outer space is never untied
Heroin, the toys
Outer space is never untied
Under is the noise, under
Outer space is never untied
Wolves inside a ship
Outer space is never untied
Blood drips down the mizenmast
Outer space is never untied
Monsters step out into the day
Outer space is never untied
You know that we will never die
Outer space is never untied
Ay'yoy the misanthrope
Outer space is never untied
Ay'yoy the paranormal
Outer space is never untied
Ay'yoy the destiny
Outer space is never untied
Ay'yoy the walking dead
Outer space is never untied

Nottitled 1

The sum total of mankind was not responsible for the creation of their world.
Nobody lives in their world; nobody but them, and they're not anything
Despite this, it was fear of *this thing* that made it appear.
It was paranoia of this thing that gave it a sudden influx of phantoms and half undeveloped
figures.

The rise of the anarchist crook named Belay was witnessed by the mysterious smoke trail, flying
in the face of all life.

Where conflict of interests thrives in twos, and indeed like the woman and the slave and then
the capitalists and socialists, outside of all of this – governing it all but not out of tune with the
rhythms of a self destructive universe - Belay on the bottom, and the bureaucracy way up top.

"I learned how to hold my head up at the back of the bus
Sitting low with fibre wire falling out of my boots" he said.

Truly, when the core ideals clash, the third party can be recycled within the system, appearing
at the bottom as the slave, beginning again and going back up, but on the whole, shuffled and
reorganized like a bended coil.
The inescapable camaraderie of nature.

Rotwich said to try to save it for later
Another child eaten by an escalator
Another dream fed to an alligator
Lost in the hospital as a respirator

You're an amalgamation of dollar signs
You should smile and take my handful
She asked me what I'm doing this for
I said that all is fair in love and war

They convinced me of how important I was
But I just did my homework
Prayers comma homework
Players, drama, bonework
He said, he has said, he will say.
Say Belay.

Datefuck Dimebag

Failure sounds like the consonant noises of your name screamed through a coffin.

The car looks like it's on the wrong way home
A monologue that sounds like a drum in episodes
The audience is screaming like "Blood! More! Blood!"
The tourniquet is nigh not made of drones and clones

Boneman knows what pain is
His falling's what the rain is
Carry nuts and quotes to the brained glass stain
On the deathbed's what his name is

Every single fuck up
Has a wicked mouth
Every single fuck up
Knows that blades don't bounce

The dirt knows you
A lot better than you think
It'll relish all your walks back
Step lively in the spring

"Forty prayers carried on a sunken breath
I'm still high on life, but now I'm drunk on death"

Murder, she wrote

And that's all she wrote.

Penis Nostyle

My dick is a ponzi scheme.
My dick is a basket of first world problems.
My dick shoots a special aids that eats through condoms like pie-ronnas
My dick is a huge racist.
My dick is a coked up celebrity.
My dick is taught North Korean sanctions.
My dick is a shovel full of shit.
I picked her up off the ground. She asked to borrow my issue of Daddy #69.
She wants to blow on my triumphet and wind me up like a Baltimore knot.
I threw her into an alligator's open mouth. I kicked the mouth shut.
Marilyn Manson / Heroin, absinthe / Where the fuck is my gun?
Children line up to kiss Michael Jackson's death mask.
I wear my sunglasses at night / You just wear them inside

My dick is a signed copy of "Dune."
My dick is rhythm in a room full of artists.
My dick is a greedy union.
My dick is a story with no ending.
My dick has a tattoo on it that reads "please wait to be seated."
My dick is Goldman Sachs and everyone wants to suck it.
My dick writes dirty jokes for black supremacists.
My dick escaped an orphanage and became a captain of industry.
My dick is the chairman of the board of entertainment.
My dick smells like coffee.
My dick has another, smaller tattoo that reads "bless this mess."
My dick is a self-loathing man fifteen levels above Stockholm Syndrome.
My dick turns your daughter's house into a slaughter house.

Kaleidoscopic Apocalypse

Slaves then slaves; they're all just slaves
Some lay lower to get out
When living's live they live to pave
And bow before a shade of gray

It's suburbia underneath tonight
It sank and was neglected
Citizens fill up with soil
And no one's can correct it

They say that they see saucers, they say they see the curve
Some say they salute posthumous, and say it's ain't absurd
They mob in fields, ominous, hold steady for the word
The mouth is wide with problems, saying shit you've never heard

And yet-

Slaves, there's slaves there's everywhere
The best of have the verbs
Silhouettes hang in the air
The healthy have it worst

But really –

Crack the whip, that tentacle
The tears will run like celebration
We have such things, so wonderful
Like epileptic animation

Crest of the Crescendo

The root of all things falling down
Is being close to one
Best-to-tangle crosshairs
A Doberman in blue
My limbless building armchairs
A pittance and a gun

Just a kid and his bowtie
A zipper like champagne
The night has drawn a dotted line
I'll sell myself again.

No scarf out here can save me
All flowers stomped like signs, I'm
The last flute of diplomacy
In the orchestra this time

I wear a suit while people die
Svffer the children, death
I stand in silky pastel blue
I'm taking unclaimed credit

I feel great they died for me
To say "fuck everyone"
Caressing the molester like music
I am a toothpick

Crest of the Crescendo
My money's tied up in blood.

Vixen's Rising

Beds buckle for her
The suicide warrior
Nails pluck at torture
No grave succeeds to quarry her
Either stab me or get me a blanket

A savior for the newly damned
A stanza drawn upon her hand
All heresy t'wards her figure and
All hails for her master plan

All jails turn to quicksand
The mail's choking some
Delegated to the post I crawl
And pall until the reading's done
Slurp your noodles for the jezebel berserker

All men of fire
Vote, piggy piggy, vote
Kill for her glance
Vote, piggy piggy, vote
Few that kill higher
Vote, piggy piggy, vote
Get in her pants
Vote, piggy piggy, vote, piggy piggy, vote

Most that are slain
Moan under heel
And much refrain
She makes them feel
Alive

The Septic Gentleman

I will kill your family
I'm a cigarette
I will build an office
Abortion's incredible
I want to make some money
I stole the internet
I will obtain satisfaction
I am debt

I will flex the industry
Veins pop out
I have a car on every road
Obsessively orbital
Nails but also saxophones
Things are complicated
Thrillseeker in the land of plenty

Juggernaut Dead

It's the worst thing I can do to you.

Sliding to the peepshow, siding at the freakshow
A narcissistic cyst growing in your glasses
Call me Columbine, I used to be new
This town, *good ! god*, it liquors dreams
Who's laughing, nay, I'm cackling now

Stabbed with ice and pickled twice
I'm dying while hypothesizing
I'm standing alone with a broke umbrella
They'll shoot me through the bathroom door

In the next life
Cancer on the pavement
Patients on the lurch path
The traitors trade their statements
The martyrs trade their combat

In the center there's a spiral
And in that spiral there's a curse
And there's forever and a mile
Then there's hyenas holding flowers

But the piles have it worst
They're only three feet tall
Not a ones dares depart
It's like nobody's there at all

The death
It's an immediate forever war
A red haired pit

The Bird Man ³ owned a prison ship that had long ago run aground. He wasn't the one who sailed it, but was the one who somehow, decades later, cleared out all the *people of venomous persuasion*. Docks, alleys, and warehouses developed around its deathbed > secondlife stew, and the Bird Man found new enemies in politicians and policeman after it came to light that he inherited the ship, and the land, from the amazing dead, and he had no interest in selling it. One day they threw a million dollars at him and he paid it no mind like it was violence or something.

Papers, despite their suspected forgery, were accepted because, at the end of the day, they just wanted him *about* money, and since he was legally unemployed, they were bound to inaction.

The Bird Man set up countless dummy corporations with names like "Can I Have Some?" and "Water Polo" to convince authorities that he was insane.

"Who would need fake corporations with no money in them?"

"What's more, how can you set up a company with no capital?"

Such questions were dismissed due to *loathsome repetition*. From a checkered cocoon, the Middleclass Roachmaster watched confused, heroic individuals tribulate themselves and earn the respect of their peers. "Call me Lawman Coon," he would say, but nobody would do it outside of his council. And at the same time, he was always alone. It was his police, and it was his people, and it was his world, but nobody even remembered he was even there. Except for some of the time, when his soldiers remembered him during coffee.

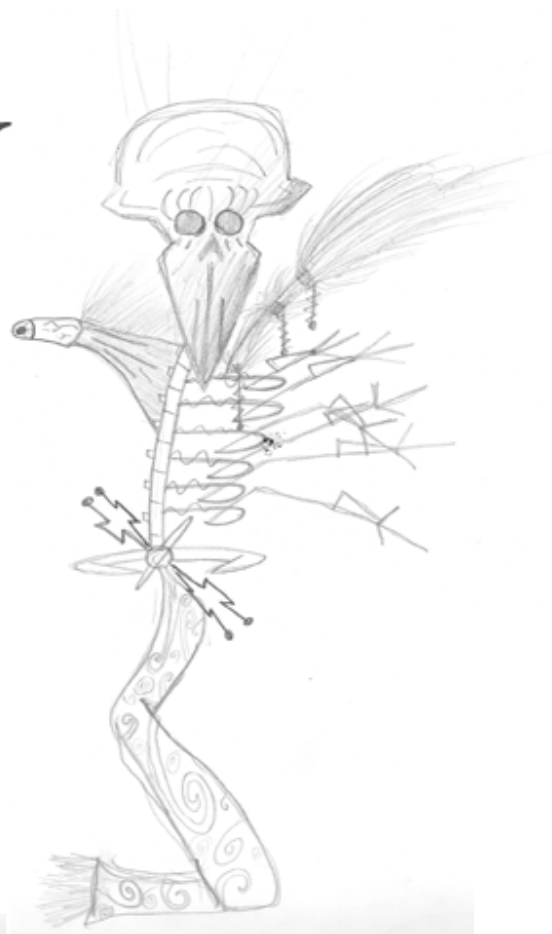
Nobody wanted to mess with the Bird Man because he referred to himself in the third person – *but only some of the time* - and talked about engineering. Nobody knew what he was talking about, and half the time he was talking about someone else; himself. There's a million ways conversations went off the rail.

On top of this, very few people approached his domain because he was a crazy tall bird humanoid whose appearance spoke grimely to fears burrowed in the human psyche.

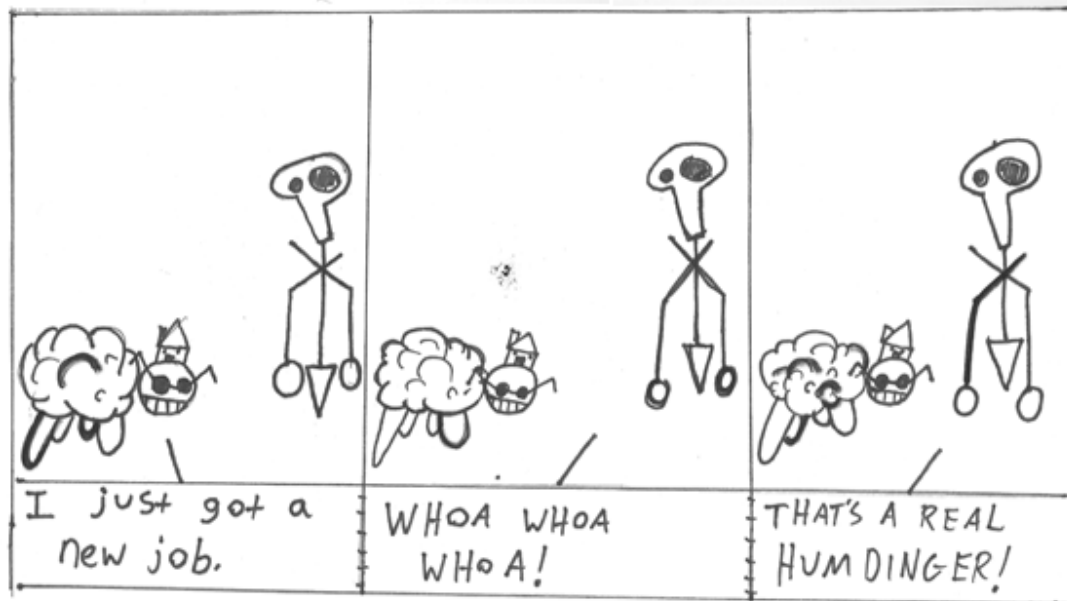
He was not taxed, nor was he billed or burdened, nor approached, questions, or absconded with; simply observed, as they all were. He lived amid the crime ridden waterfront, emerging only at night to catch fish like an old pirate ghoulish son of a bitch. He would cast his line out into reputedly unfruitful waters, pulling in boots and carriages and hollow lobsters. Sometimes people would ask him what he was toiling away at in that horrible fucking ship. Upon being asked, he would turn his head 360 degrees around, repeating the process until whoever was asking walked away.

³ See Diag. 1 right around here.

WHISKY PAGE



Human Error



Hanna

I got no more petty goals, I got all the pretty coals
I loved you like I couldn't escape

All novels colliding earthquakes like a penance bomb
I can't hide insiding like a haunting in the renaissance
No longer veiled, 6 foot coffin nail
There's still much wailing from the rain gods hailing

Lie to me like you're my property
I'll start first, you're not
Hate is great done honestly
I put the hot in rot

I have an empty bottle with your name on it.

Powder Mountain

The moon is sweating and reflects the light from our sex
The sun draws a tiny circle above our heads
There's a million way to suffer and you will count them
Amid the centipedes of Powder Mountain

Once a year, magnetic poles will drift
Once a year, the penalties will pause
Once a year, your parts will not be where you found them
You see the centipedes of Powder Mountain

For a moment the moment carries a country
For a moment the moment stretches out its legs
For a moment, they look alarmed at what's around them
The giant centipedes of Powder Mountain

Before you know it – it takes forever – it is gone
The orbits are connected; nothing's wrong
They now scarcely can remember what surrounded them
The orange centipedes of Powder Mountain
The horrid centipedes of Powder Mountain
The storied centipedes of Powder Mountain

Lazarus Drill Constantine

A whisper and a blister, come
One come all military
Amazons and cellulites
On time and likely married

Perry thoughts of malcontent
The time is now for parliament
Falling towers need our love
Like clawing fingers need a glove.

I can't believe.

Oh, how did the cripple beat me to completion?
Gentile sir looks a child star
Her sex was dinosaur and war
And lo the flowers closing doors
Mychenics sore from horrible boards
Slap my body like water whores

I'm the guy that made your wife wet and duck
Grab my ziggurat by both fists and suck

Bullets bleed out question marks
The king; a bell in a cannibal ark
Our immigrants push Owd-down the gates
We're drawn upon for Seven's sakes

St. Vivicott's my only name
Disasterwreck's the game I play
I'm gonna blow your mind out – lick your eyes out
Peel the flesh from my vortex and extract pleasure from my
Damning right out

I can't believe.

Every single fucking second
I feel the eel turn
Hard, touching hands to mine
Heart, tornado deals in --

Scripts framed in its name
St. Vivicott will break your --
My soul is the stamp what pollutes the stars
Your fiction buckles in my presence

I can't believe they taught the doormats how to be skyscrapers.
Acid smells really heavy, man

It's the kind of weight I need.

I don't understand it when I say I can't believe that.

**III Id K
(I Called It)**

Television brought me your long and bony self
Here comes the applause with a capital cue

Hell, I wish I was taller
And in no ways am I short
Well I wish I was a father
Just so I could say "abort"
I'm not careful what I wish for

This grandeur is an opera
Produced by slaves and strays

He poses the word "imagine" as a question.

I called it, phoned it; I deal in broad symbols.

i roll on broken pencils
i roll like flog-gedd minstrels

I've got nothing cool to say right now.

Waste

I won't wait to be saved
Year of the severed head
I'll lay; I'm paved
With the pleased dead

I said give me your tired, your sick, your poor
And I'll give you a fucking textbook
My bones are ripe with passion, plans
Your phones talk
k fucking fashion, man
I hold a tall hat in my hand.

You inspired me to acupuncture most foul.

What prince isn't the queen of contradiction?
What honest palace isn't built out of garbage?
He wants to go but hates goodbyes
So he ties his legs to the night and flies

The prince I mean, the prince I mean.

I came, left crucifix sagging
Left choir dying, left siren sighing
Left the whole scene standing, piquing
Left life of ciphers violined, rifleing
I told them all to don a chapeau

You gave me unenthused vulva
I thrust a status quo
I got crossed twice, got laid in lice
I gave you children beaten, laid out in rows
This one's about hats.

I sold myself with grim reprieve
Bought your self with words I didn't believe
A flag on the hill of what's been said
Said home's a place where the water runs red
How do I sell myself? I've never said.

Where I come from, this is hat writing.

Still fiending for a plot to steal with (a) doctor's skill
Still looking for a spot to ill, a proper meal
How long until retard rhymes, I'm taking bids
God damn it, I'm not rich, I'll eat your kids!

Extracted the ink from your pupils, --
It'll take two planes crashing to please me with
Wanna be with you like a needle cough stitch
But the devil's on my shoulders and he's got one wish
To put a ace of spades in his hat in a famous way

Slit wrists, a bridge of them towards the sky
I'll die on high if you're left behind
Earth's got no feelings; its sperm uncollected
My home is where your heart is; cobwebbed cause I neglect it.

I got sick of my head so I wore a mask
I got sick of my thoughts so I wore a hat
I got sick of my words so I took them back

I wrote them a note with a crooked pen
Wrote "never speak my name again!"

Put something heavy on my head.

[i]Piss[/i]

Call me Columbine, I used to be new
Call me Columbine, I used to be new
My heroes would use guns
My heroes would use brain
I'm the stupidest persons
I'm the most useless idiot

Everyone's looking at me
Everyone's talking about me
I'm the most important
Because I'm the most hideous

They'll all laugh when I die
I'm tired of thinking
I have all these notebooks
Every day is a failed guitar solo

Be nice to cancer but gossip my belt
There's no world beyond this
I'd be a hero if I wasn't so stupid
All the movies make more sense than this
Movies involving me are insulting

A world of fantasies
Delusions of grandeur

Someone has to die

The Slave lived on the streets, in the heart of the city, which by all accounts was just as bad as the awful docks and the worse beach. I'll tell you what was going on there.

The space above the (sic) groundstuck citizens, near the tops of buildings, or the midriff of taller ones, was so full of power lines and weird dead lizards and smoke that it was like a ceiling. It wasn't always night, but it was.

The Slave was part of the streets and spent most of his time in front of wet buildings, encased in a film of sweat and spit and coughs and pollution. He was always wiping his body to get the stuff off of him. Spending lengths more than minutes outside felt like being mummified, if you were to doze off or forget where you were.

The only real light they had was streetlamps and oil lamps donated by people who had lived there their whole lives, having long ago come to terms with the fact that every place was the same and there was no use going anywhere. In a case of satisfaction saving lives, a precious few made their appreciation public. The Slave was one of them, however infrequently it was.

Despite the scarcity of hope, connections could not be drawn to a post-apocalypse, because despite the dirt and the naivety and the corruption, there was order and nobody was terribly scared for their lives.

All the toxins in the air had the mind wandering into dangerous territory; the stuff that would bury blinking lights.

If you were to forget what you were doing and why you were there.

The Slave, while spending most of his time in front of those buildings, frequented Little Romania, surrounded by people frantically planning to get out. All his friends were learning second, third, fourth languages. The women wanted to marry rich and the men wanted to marry at all. The Slave didn't have any plans, and he figured it was because he wasn't Romanian. Regardless, he slunk around and tried to get inspired by the ambiance.

Tales of escape generally involved the docks because it was easy to steal a ride if one knew where they were going. Trains were repeatedly hijacked and busses were frequently assaulted by knife gangs.

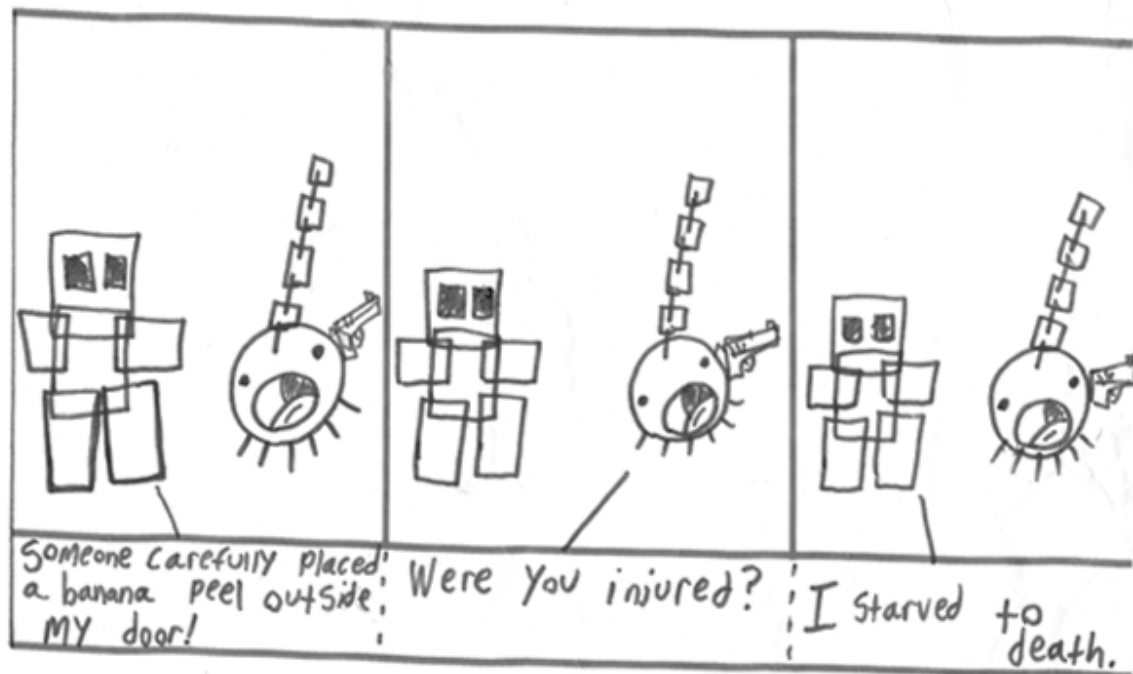
Naturally, talk of the docks touched upon the Bird Man and his weird experiments.

The Slave had spent one and one half years surrounded by escapists, and having no idea more fruitful than what he had when he came in, decided to leave. He knew that desperate men talked of change like a gamble, but he was far past listening to the things he had committed to memory for the lust of life.

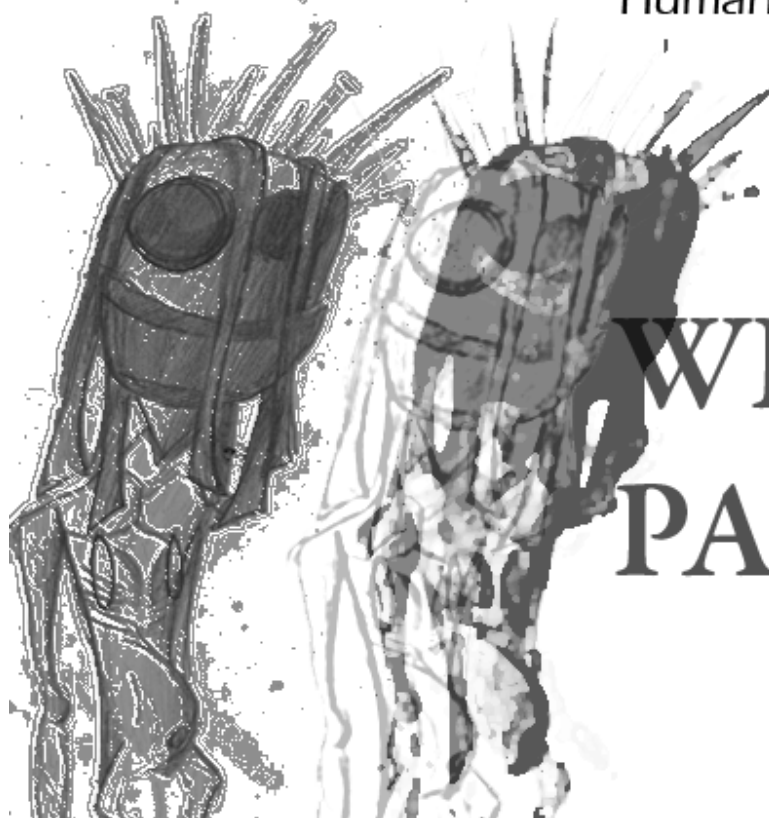
He left Little Romania behind with only one language and no ticket.

And sometimes all you need during transitory times is a mask.⁴

⁴ See: "Balaclava the Bird;" not the exact thing, but a similar thing.



Human Error BY: WICKED STRIP



WHISKY
PAGE

Modus Ponens

"I got something scary up my sleeve.
There's a candelabra comma casket carried on, carried on, carried on through it."
The damage of the man that thinks like a blizzard
Versus the majesty of the man that's got it all figured

In a rhythm like a prison there's a prism for some fog
There's more story there than memory
I'm breathing like a dog

Schizophrenic love, call it two yellow lights
Towers tucking over only visible in hindlime
My paranoia's planes crashing, two at a time
My discrepancies are present but not despicable in rhyme

Lady, you got a boyfriend?
Well that's just a non-issue
My words, they tend to moisten thighs
That's why I carry tissues

No, that's not it, but bless you.

You don't gotta sleep with me, but you gotta sleep underneath
I tell it: you use your tongue like it's another set of teeth
I asked you what I taste like not if I'm flavour of the week
I asked for seven Hail Mary's but you have to make it brief

All wetter to the letter, sorry lady I lost it
Like my climax like a fountain, like my orgies like a mosh pit
It's like one finger, two fingers, three fingers, arm
There's no smile like a scream; pleasure like an alarm

You can't say "want" with your mouth full, dummy
Cutie tells me love, it can change the world
I'll just keep filling dreamers with my demon seed
Hiding glass-card houses till I get what I deceive

But they won't let me leave
Because it's not all about me

Lice in the Echo Chamber

A metal pole in the ground
Called it something; called it lazy
Stick a stripper on the thing
Whoagod the climax was amazing

Dug his chest just to touch no heart at all
Fingerprint on the calendar the day he died
Cut open his gut just to see a mouth that cries
Was rehired as a tire fire to get inside
This guy

He wanted to be hard, wanted more to be twisted
Drew a dream on a card, tried to chew it like a biscuit
Tried to buy into the world where there's more bubbles than fishes
Had to fuck his sister just to tell a story with it (nigger)

Culture got him down, had to breathe against the floor
More scowls per the hour, wonder what you're lying for
He will lick that filth, call it a casualty of war
Body bags up on your shoulders, this is what you're dying for

Entertainers can't love you, they're radio waves
Praise is okay; only stories survive the cold fellatio flames
These ideas won't save you, they're underground
This culture won't appraise you, it's land buying property now

You kill your father or you bck the fck ff!
Sk-srnle your hres, il ke t ht sp
I think we inflate ourselves with mimicry
And I think it's a task's errand to find imitation in hyperbole

Something flowers, something hill, something winter, something weather
You need to hate yourself but not be absorbed
If they hand you medicine and you say yes
The dogs'll eat your tongue, and birds will carry some
And the sun will make it done.

Kid, rebellion's got letters like everything
"Every subsequent kick is just a ticket to a club"
If your bones aren't ripe with passion then your words are fucking fashion
Never stammer from the falling of the hammers of tru(nigger)st

I think he had a name
Think he tried to unget it
See my hands are just as money
See I'm masturbating with it

Sell out to sell in to sell out again
To win at sex you gotta admit you're a mother fucker
The incestuous brothers of a waterfall
You wanna win at life, you draw a necklace with a knife
From the top; I'm made of money so I just get buyed.
The cash with a backpack and a mischievous smile
It's a world of money, sex, death, and files

All your toys are made of oil
Toil, took it to your dome
Nine busses out of service
Boy, you're never going home

Rain Red Ribbons

She took my heart
But
I put a bow on it
Cried her a river
So I could row on it

And there's a chair
Painted black
And there's a mirror
Painted crack
And there's her hair
Painted red
And there's her creature
Like a painted shed

And there's a heart
It's painted bag
And there's a word
It's painted well
And there's a card
It says goodbye
The paint on the shed
All hard and dry

Guess there's a door
It's not a square
Guess there's a floor
It's hardly there
Guess there's a war
It's everywhere
Guess there's a story
Smashed on the stairs

I want a lie
That's coloured green
I want a tie
And gasoline
I want to stay
And still be cleaned

I want to play
Without a team

I need some money
Fifteen cents
I need a pitchfork
Painted lent
I need some sun
To pay the rent
I need the shovels
From the shed

Burning Bridges Made Of Cartoon Witches

Some sleep this turned out to be
Alone now, *hohandfulofwiresw* it's cold
I made a harmonia
Played for an orchestra
Stone phone, now it's old
She angled me how the peak must be

I hurt because *because because*
She told me how what Ireland was
Lights transformed to nothing more
Than rings that press me to the floor

The window made me sicker still
It makes me want to miss her still
But makes me miss all that's of value
It makes a kiss a multiplying shadow
Multiplying off into some unidentified dimension, flushed back into the crucible of death.

On the head of my back
A glance stuck to my belt
Some whispers on my lips and
A ghost that's on my hips
For every noise it makes, there's the overwhelming feeling that it shouldn't.

Nineteen's no number at all
Even if it's got a lot of heat
You talk but can't make machines
You sing but *horned* if you ever read
It was years ago but I still have the same machines being boondoggled by these people.

You know shipwrecks have a lot to talk about
The reef's a decent place to meet
It's about how sentences live in winks
No agendas can live down where the after boats sink
Figure that one out, genius. Figure it out right now.

Monochrome made him pine for yellow
But yellow treated them so bad
And red leads to a runway
And blue leads to the blues, some say

Rainbow rising precariously from a puddle of vinegar is what I'm trying to say.

I wish I could hold a palette
I wish a hammer wasn't on my shoulder
I wish I knew some magic
I want to hold her like a boulder
Like something to somewhere to some thing to use to absorb her.

When they weren't drinking coffee, Professionals were standing on top of buildings trying to figure out where their race was going, and at what speed. They were minority capitalists laughing casually at a world of socialists. While they were employed, their wildest dreams were allowed to run wild, at least in theory.

For a long time they had been watching The Slave; walking back and forth, taking up multiple residences, treating friends like sentences and enemies like numbers. They didn't hide their faces because knowledge of their presence wouldn't change anything. As far as anyone was concerned, death didn't even exist.

There were more of them than two, but since they were all interchangeable and it was understood that two was the strongest number – nearly as strong as a triangle – they rarely broke convention.

The Professionals, as a group, prayed to seventeen devils; a pantheon of weakness expressed in various muted shades. Each devil was weak and crippled, driven by hubris, or obsession or hate or desire. It was like Satan was julienned into separate scenarios where everything could go wrong.

I say this because...

"I think it's time we prayed," said the one on the left. They were both staring down at the Slave as he paced tensely underneath balconies and overhanging pieces of fabric.

"No, shut up. We're at work. This is work."

"I don't think it could hurt."

"Everything hurts. Everything gets dented the more you do. I don't want to ruin this."

"I think you're misinterpreting what it's-"

"I think that you think that I think something that I don't."

"I hope not. Don't make me say that again."

"What do you know?"

The Slave paused at the corner of an intersection and lit a cigarette, looking up at the Professionals as they looked right back. The levels of their expressions were equalized so fine that they could have passed for mannequins.

"What should we do?" asked the one on the left, as if there was any doubt.

"Huh..."

"I think he knows everything."⁵

"So does everyone else. But they don't have the machines. The glorious... *fucking* machines."

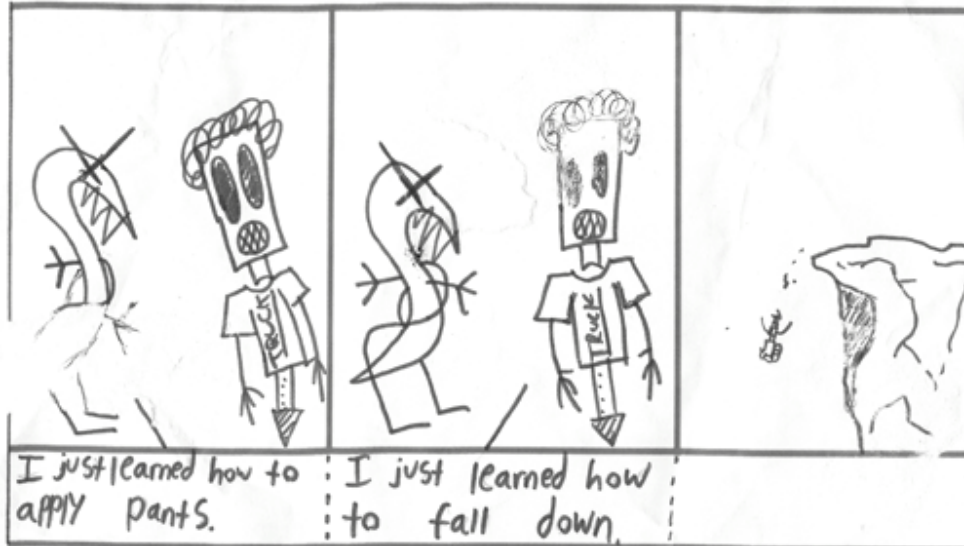
The Slave narrowed his eyes, not at all surprised or troubled by the weird voyeurs, but rather raking his memory to sort them out. He didn't want the same way everyone else wanted it; he was beyond the grind and that made a lot of people angry. Or suspicious. Or cautious.

"We might get in trouble if we don't pray right now."

"We'll get in more trouble if we don't get coffee."

"That's absolutely right."

⁵ See Diag. 2.



Human Error BY: Wicked Stripe

WHISKY PAGE



Diag. 2
"Middleclass
Roachmaster"



RORSKRATCH

She's a Rorschach sign
Looks vaguely like a flower
Awkward talking rhyme
Awkward-wakward talking rhyme

The story of your hardcore's mediacre, how
The whales are hugging to the shore now
It looks like the tide like it holds like a whore now
Have all the agents selling more now

She stepped to parliament to save her kid
The front doors flew open like their minds once did
She stands in the halls where the senators lived
Fulfillment longed tall like the head of a squid

"We heard you're an electrician now-"
Said an old man with women hugging green
(Whales) "I love you, there's an election now."
"It's cold now" with an empty scream.

The future held her hand tightly there
They found not any pulse anywhere
They saw flashes of cents signs everywhere
She needed faith in self without fail

As impoverished as they were
She refused to reject
With every step there's no regret
No hangars on their heads

A walk that's tall can't have a quiver
They choices as they come based in cement
When they come from within, they can do without
No bones in the closet, no statements in the basement

Government sideward by their peoples
The peoples shook, tented their steeples
No books they held contained the word "evil"
Must not have been; the world's a meal

You Had Me At "Hell No."

It's the place where the first few million died
Where the noiseuz got eyes and the soil's alive
The spirits collecting are anaesthetized
And all I want to do is die.

The clouds to the sky are magnetized
The moon to the stars is cauterized
I proudly wear a towel of flies
And all I want to do is die.

Divide twix't'd the smile and time is wide
Their eyes in the night are plagiarized
From nightmares grime as matyrcide
And all I want to do is die.

I took the fall and made it mine
I took the tar and made it shine
I'll take your hand, you take this life
Cause all I want to do is die.

Shot by a Feminist

Walking down Church; it's cold, I'm wearing a tux
19 years old and feeling like a million bucks
See a homeless woman and I couldn't give two fucks
But there's another girl ahead who does, she does

I hear 'em talking...

"You hate men?"/ "Yeah I think I do!"
"I got this .9, how many you think I can shoot?"
"I dunno" / "What you need some proof?"
"I do" / "Hell, will that son of a bitch do?"

Bullet exposes my back and hits my spine
I thank to shit it's coated in diamonds
On the ground, light a smoke and take a drag
Raise my middle finger and I wave the flag

I need a therapist for my new tattoo
I got shot and I'm mute like the blue man group
I took a look back to review the news
No voices but I heard the sound of tapping shoes

Walked up, gun ready just to clap the blues
Possum gone, bastard on, and I grabbed their shoes
Pulled them both left and I cranked their ankles
And grabbed the gunpiece when it sank and dangled

I split it down the middle with my one great tooth
And threw it at some slave in a telephone booth
Grabbed both of their scalps and then knocked their heads
Snatched their purses and their skirts and I walked away dead

Play with Me

I found the seesaw
It's in my bed
I found where peaceful's
Drunked and fed

There's eyes in there
Like you've never seen
There's stars in there
That queen the bleed

It's totally dark
Arms made of light
3:00 AM in the park
It's a blow stripe snow fight

Queer the Pitch

I just put money down on the estate

There's more river here than there ever was there
And there's gates near the lakes where the mob was paired

Amid the riot - in the pile – there's the face of an angel
Hidden in the heart there's a swan that's apeing
Scratchy little strokes, it's a hateful little painting
Bringing the blues back to your shameful fucking rainbow

No one told the queen how to behave the bees
All she has is history, behave the bees

Down where the fish tall, found bubbles full of steam
There's a castle, there's a hill, sounds of licking in a pale of cream
There's a steeple, pencil, and a puzzle and a prize
There's hair like the Nile, whatever that means

It's 10:00 AM; "they've opened the bags"
Tied bodies to chains; "it's such a drag"
There's palettes of pills to smile the slag
"There's too many hearts broken on that rag"

There's a comedian in charge like bulbs in a bag
He's dim and large, bulbs in a bag

She's smoking eyeballs from a cannon
She lowered four clovers in a canyon
She'll take every nail just to fill the good
Like every good little fucking girl should

More salt in her nails than there ever was there
Black books were sat where her hair was paired

She took the warzone everywhere.

It was a city of heroes in the truest sense of that sentence had it been a sentence. The Days of Christ were through and people were looking for a Proto Zeus to give their shit some zeal. A generation of peoples were raised on cinema – the red carpet of stories – and wondered with anxious fists how they could achieve their own glory. That was just it: glory. It was a glory as abstract as seventeen dying demon gods or their notion that anything was everything. The beliefs of the people had mirrored those of the elite not too long prior, and the symmetry spelled a long, surreal sentence, something about how everything was going to change.

Everyone was taking on the world, and spreading their life and telling their story, convincing musicians to make songs about them and talking musicians away from talking up themselves. Everyone had something dire to do because knowledge had given way to fear, and everyone thought the world was going to end the next day. The Little Romanians wanted to get out, but the skinheads wanted to start Holocaust II that afternoon and the musicians had to figure out a way to solve music. Everyone needed all the money and every beats had to be slain, was the general consensus.

And in a world full of heroes, the valkyries get pissed. That's what was going on.

The valkyries were rightfully confused by the whole situation, and no longer having certain people to believe in, they decided to thin out the herd and cut through the fucked up fiction that had manifested under the sick, ultraviolet light of satisfaction. Everyone wanted truth; I said it once. I'm not going to say it again.

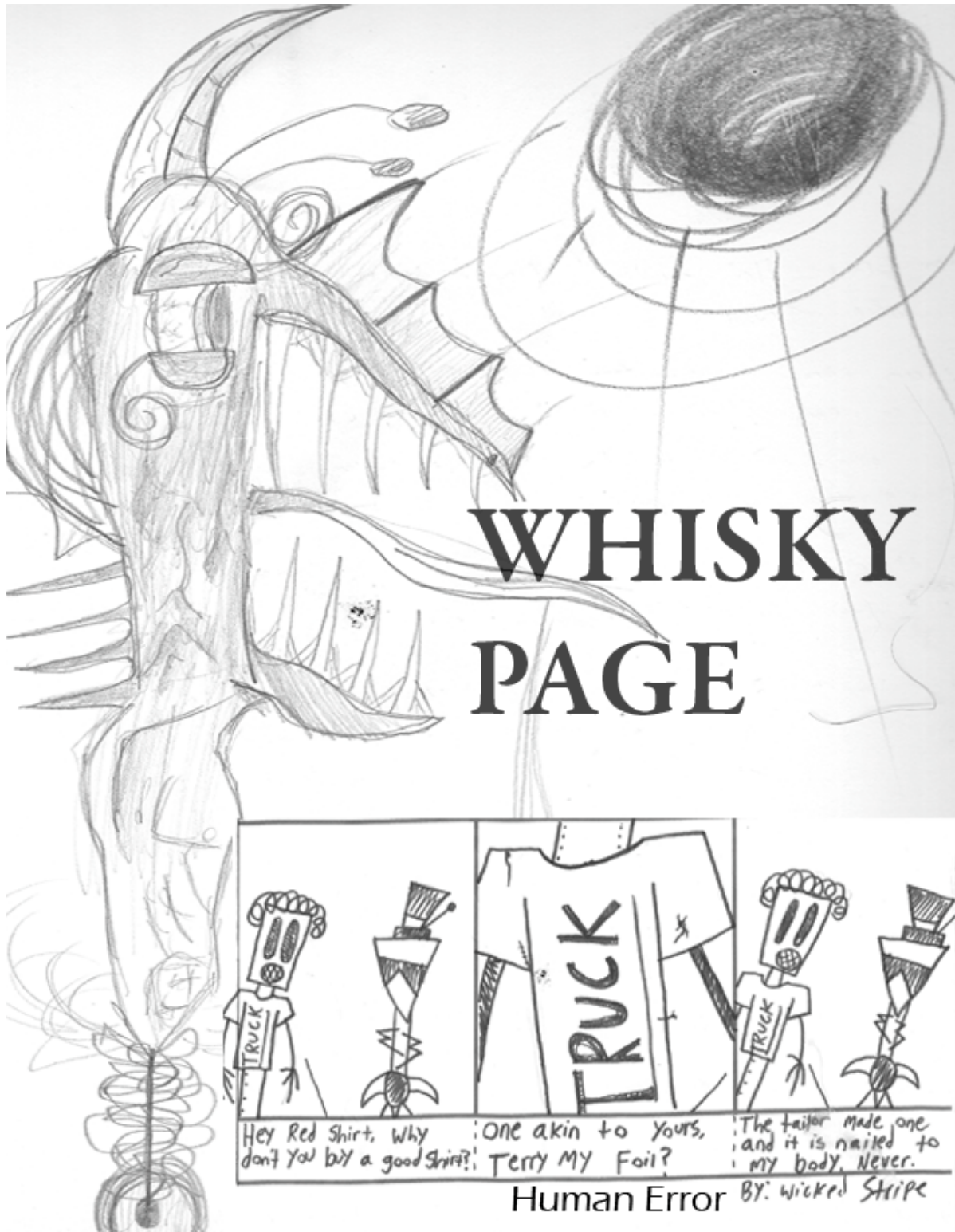
They came from the sky and introduced drugs founded on new concepts. They made addicts out of good people who were once filled with optimism they'd cobbled together from bright things they'd found. The Slave fell victim to it, on and off, for as long as he could look up at the ceiling and wonder.

The cocktails changed every week and the names changed every day. Pills and powders and food dropped down through narrow pillars of light, or sometimes hand delivered by the armoured, angelic things.

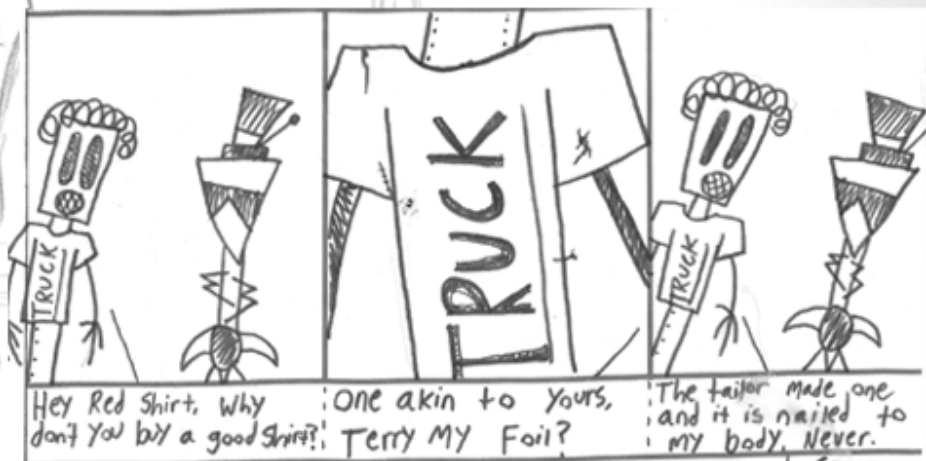
On his path out of Little Romania on the way to oblivion, The Slave was handed a small satchel filled with metallic-looking pills. The creature was 6 feet tall, its face veiled behind flowing locks of yellow hair, its body either covered in bright light or polished armour. He'd met their kind before and he couldn't tell if it recognized him. He coughed seven times in the bag and dropped it to the ground.

That was the long and the short of it cause Valkyries don't have the power to slap people. Except with a cocaine high.
Am I right? Ladies? ⁶

⁶ "Oh Dimes, you nebulous fresh."



WHISKY PAGE



Human Error BY: Wicked Stripe

Tired up too Tight

A Play by W.M. Dimes.

The curtains rise and the bodies fall silent
The music arrives, it flies, it rises like a pilot
Behind the scenes a judge beats a girl
In the dressing rooms: ladies bending over

A boy dressed in green walks onto the stage
He chokes his own throat / begins to play
He falls back, back on his back
Then he is dragged away.

Wires lower a silhouette from above the rafters
There was a cow up-butchered - dropped down what's after
A murder of snakes wipe from both dark sides
And wash over it to thick peals of laughter

I'm sitting in the crowd, steady reading a script
The lady to me left is seizurring in a sick fit
I raise my head only to catch a nitwit
On stage taking a skinned rabbit to both her tits

I'm leaving early cause I've seen this part
And I've got twelve Dalmatians waiting in the car
Before I leave I shoot a glance towards the bar
They've still got the director's head that I sent in a jar
This means war

No Means Go

No rhyme for paradise between six and eight
Same sex isn't bad if the sex is great

(Avant Garde)

I wanna wash my body in the sea (Frustration)
I wanna feel the worm wash over me (Anger)
I wanna see the sun wink one last time (Exhaustion)
Then light the mountains and make them shine (Bitterness)
(Structure Bullshit)

My lifestyles grown beyond my pockets -
12 foot cylinder in a square foot plank -
My dollars be drank and my cents be sniffed -
I need to steal some safes so I can throw them at a bank -

I'm a sucker for food and I blow at art
I'm destined to fail and I guess I love being fired
All I've got is passion and my precious hatchet
But I can't have both; one fucks up the mattress
But I won't say witch

I know what help is
But it's useless out here

I wanna be a bully; first I need a big gun
Second sword, third battleship, fourth jaws of life
I'd buy a long cape if I had the funds
Then I'd buy a ball gag for the perfect wife
"This feels so wrong that it must be right"
With this dirty rag I define my life

Tall milk bottle full of blood, period.

Slugs

Consider this my resignation from diplomacy.

I told you every word I know
I said too much and not enough
I saw you try to fly times three
“I watch you cry red wine and scream”
Said the slugs, said the slugs

My slugs all know how to punch
There's me at
The bike, the back
All my bugs ate *all* my lunch

They're slow but big
They're sticky and wet
They'll poison and squish
All the juice out of your head

They'll climb so high
They can speak into our minds
We die when they slide
Hold our heads when they pass by

Stream of consciousness like omnipresence, posthumous
Spike of politics swarmed by c-c-communists
Stretch the governor, open palms like blisters
Mazaltov with Molotovs
Plucking heartstrings with thinner things

The other slugs salt the parliament
No love for the House of Commons
No more marching for the lawless comet
No parsing for the dead at the summit

It's slugs.

Cherry Poppin' Cemetery

They're the same dirty people that sold me Rome
On high with dead eyes like busy stone
The same sort of people write behind the scenes
Write "what a little fucking pretty pill she cleans."

And then they stop.
I heard there were answers out west, at best
I got beat with micropunches, the insidiest
My friends bought me a car, said to "sort this out."
Now I'm sitting in a tree with plasma and pressed
But I don't really know anyone
So I make out suspect
Now all I know is the road
Where the mess is made public
But nobody's paying attention

They were all just in lust
With the passion of the part
Outsider wary of
Over-saturation from the heart
But that's cool cause people know what we don't.
So at least they can find me at the side of the road.

Dreams of Problematic Infamy

Whatever you thought it was
It was me
I'm the sphere

Elected, collected accounts
It was me
I'm the sphere

Whatever whatever they said
It was me
I'm the sphere

Everyone, altogether now
It is me
I'm the sphere

Your dreams seem small
Welcome home
I'm the sphere

That That Girl (Therapist Pistol)

I'm an artist cause I know just what I'm not
And I'd have the whole sky if I could hate the world
And a colony of these if I lose the girl
(He just parted the seas and exposed the world)

Everything sounds better rolling out her mouth
She's so many books - owns so many hooks
Songs about all these fingers running through her hair
But you can't say hurt without her there

Escape it you might- I might be modern
Dare I might pop - pop a chorus - pop a collars
I say she lives in novels and washes songs
I say she covers fire and swallows bombs

"Word to your blanket, Dimes."
Damn, it's my popped collar.
"I like that new story – what, 'Mythology of Dollars?'"
It's the Dollar of Mythology.
"Uh huh, that's the one."
Tell me, why you still talking about suicide, son?"
Man, it's just a brush stroke.
"Just seems like your brush broke."
You don't squint enough, though.
"No, I think there's much more
that you could be saying; I hear gears are changing."
I think there's more to write about than life on pages.
"There's nothing else than life."
That's why you're on my shirt.

I tried to fill a blank book with words about a blank book
All the shelves are shaking to show me how
Got my head down now, now I'm full, can't look
At the table of contents for the symbolist cow
Don't tell her that two to tango means one needs to know how
All I do is collect clocks and calendars now
To find the day when I can't parade those things I cannot do
Then I'll pack up all my things and I'll just leave town
I feel dirty in the parade
That's where she put me.

Set the piano to snow like only Saturday can
It sounds like death on a still train by night

The Tolerance Clown

Born once, I'm dead again, all hail Satan
I pray in dreams to slow machines
Scored once, never again; all hail trenches
It puts the lotion on its things

Abercrombie shirts all pecked by eagles
Heat exhaustion, but my liquor's tanned
Luxury hurts; just so many needles
Can't visit the grave; my *fasuz* banished

I Appreciate the Kind Words

She said "I was hijacked by a vaguely mustachioed man."
I murdered fucking menus with the tenure of a mouse
It's not a broken home, it's just a broken fucking house

Give me good meets evil; I don't care if they're equal
Feel better - seems people fare better in the sequel
I'm haughty with my black eye from brawls with laws
"Now I need you to think without using your claws"
What's in the box?

There's five wise men on a delicate crane
They smiled and I'll never get high again

Bullet riddled body, inverted silhouette, chocolate chips
Venus killed the boy cause she had drills under her skin
Like how a pious wreckage girl stands tall with mastery of her shins
Here everybody gets together with some liquor just to whisper
What's in the box?

I taught them to care like no-one'd seen their face
Don't read this eulogy; say it loudly with your eyes
Or write it on a monkey, have it manage this place
Maybe then my work won't be so personalized

I hate to break it to you – no one made the Shakespeares
Hate to plate it, break it on you – pouring gravy on the floor
I like my doctors grinning with big, thick lenses
I like pretty girls who've been beaten with wrenches
And with it -

Turn my work in on myself
Like a suit on a collapsing parasite
A bearded man masturbates to carbonite
Kindofcommon like the inverted parts of scythes
But thanks anyway.

My cocoon of familiarity is growing cold.
I will ruse up like a phoenix with a box.

What's in the box?

The Slave criss-crossed a path across the city, phasing from slum to cash then back again. Somewhere in Little North Korea he witnessed a woman drawing horizontal stripes upon the face of a corpse. She was crouching low and using loose strokes like swinging a whip. Leaning heavy against a stable-covered post, he let himself fall into mesmerisation. There was a confidence there, pure, like she was up and beyond in the same atmosphere as him, just a little to the left. She was tall and slender, unshamed mostly in black lace or ironic black wood. The wood hung from her hips and forearms, and then her ankles. She had a pair of sunglasses on with long rags falling off the lenses, sitting on her shoulders and cascading down her back like a cape. Her hands were dry and cracked like they had been bleached or worse, maybe. She looked busy, and that she had always been busy. She acted like she was famous, and even though he did not know who she was, and she had no reputation, he was drawn to her and began to draw an aura around her with whatever personal memories were anchored to glory. He hoisted his awareness up above his nose, and fully understanding of what was going on, was nonetheless intrigued that fame could exist in a vacuum and walk around. It was everything he was taught to love, but rebelliously oblivious, "like the universe chuckling to itself."⁷

There was a gang of five North Koreans standing across the street, looking over at the corpse like it had been their friend but there was nothing they could do. He secretly wanted to sleep with her, but he hadn't showered in a long time and, without a mirror, could only assume he looked like rapist. While he ran all those imperfections through his head, she had finished. On that street, underneath those faded banners and bells, they were both practicing their art.

She had drawn eight purple stripes on the dead guy's face. The Slave was so busy admiring the measurement of it all that he almost lost sight of her; she was walking away and entering a building close by. He followed her in with half-purpose in his stomach. She was not undead, but she was dead. She was not undead, but she was dead.

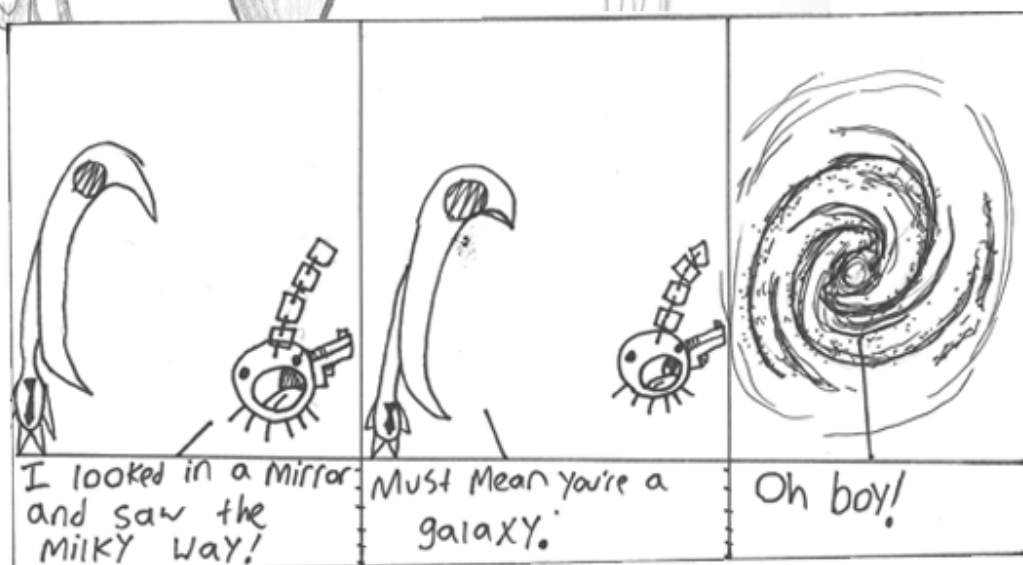
She lived in the building, up on the third floor. It was an old place and nobody paid rent. By all accounts it was a place for squatters and transients. He came to refer to her as A Transient. All the while he was observed surgically by the two Professionals, who had set up sanctuary atop a roof across the street.

"What's he up to?"
"No good I reckon."

⁷ Anonymous comment directed towards Mr. W.M. Dimes, 2007.



WHISKY PAGE



Human Error BY: WICKED STRIP

Black to Slab to Back

No, I got this bass guitar just to, just to just to
No, I'm racing this car just to drive in place and I wouldn't know what to do with it
No hailing necessary; yay's on my face
This is Formula 500- I came here to get wasted
No, you didn't grab attention, you just spoke arrestings
Existentialist poetry, catch smoke with dressings
If you wanna story stabbed out, whispering, messy
I don't even have a phone; doesn't matter, just text me
I'm a rockstar; the illusion of control.

Fuck living in the city, I'm buying a hill
And by the way, if you; to fuck with all this flirting – god bless the shell
Fuck all this murder- a coma's all you'll have
I write this as I go along – black to slab to black

There's no escaping this nebulous law.

I didn't create this; I just gave it a tie.

Circle of Disgust

I'm up here dangled, hanging, dangled over roses and cloves
Cause all we made together was some motherfucking rope
Stuck with high rises falling, growing on the spot
Let's just be honest – no wait, let's not

Just rest your pretty little head
Cause all good ladies go to heaven
I never liked drugs till they put th' em'e in a song
I might not be wicked but *goddamn*it I'm wrong
In my palm I hold three connected songs

Hey remember the time I cut the head off your neck?
Left you dead in a little red snow sled out in the shed?
Well you owe me your soul and I'm demanding respect
You'll be forever in a hole when I cash in the cheque

I walked through the desert where I learned hypnotics
Now my propaganda vehicle has got hydraulics
Standing at the back trying to match the tempo
And pitch of their horrid holocaust libretto

I owe my thoughts to spectacle
A volcano living in a reticle
An agent exploding forever, so
Incredible, so indebted, low

I'm stepping lively through the Year of the Severed Head
-- Lay on knives; from above they look like diamonds
A nebulous bloodclot
Connect the dots:

The devil took the figure of the father and son
So the reverend put a finger through the base and the sum
Put his fate upon the table for the hatable one
Even god knows not what his brain is capable of

On her cranium, a crater from a paper made gun
It's amazing what the mayor and the state do for fun
Left her makeup on the pavement but they're saving him some
Her legs are what they make them; she's their favourite one

This kid loved soil so he buried a nun
Then he dug her back up so he could be carrying some
Twenty names in his pocket, intent of marrying some
A dirty kid in this chapel like some carrion scum

Circle of disgust; every story's the same
They all have endings where we forget their names

This is bigger than people, but smaller than a game.

It's a bubble in a riddle
It's a bubble in a riddle

Marriage McPiano NoStyle

Remote control for a Viking ship
Stonehenge head eats a nine eleven
An alien as silent as a casket full of hair
Birds are chirping as a disease propagates
Children are simply carriers for vaccines
It will keep happening.
It will never stop rehappening.

Every nasty event lowers the entire chain of events with it; it's all the same sick.

I severely questioned the colony that was responsible for the assimilation of the literal heart into the idea of "love," and the irrelevant symbol that resulted.
Marriage McPiano! Eh!

Once I decided "the woman" came from beneath the Earth's crust, it got louder.
She started talking like "fame" was useless because people are idiots.
Marriage McPiano! Whoa! Now!

Everytime I examine the situation I get farther away from it.
I am investigating a thousand tiny fingerprints to jettison me, bit by bit, from this pseudo-reality.
And I suppose that's why mankind invented outer space.
"Neurotic narcissistic placenta faggot."
And then she went back into my face.

Big Red Ladder

Ran towards that thing he wrote with a pin
Wrote "nothing only came from everything."

The air looked mostly like a peacock waving
The dream of manifesto was caught and choked
And its guy was trying to save it – thought his thing was worth saving
Try to pull it from some vodka ladies living in the smoke

This – city made of second, third, fourth, fifth tongues
The streets out here aren't safe – walk the dominant ones
And these streets seem wider fighting for your right to brawl
It loves the dark – scared of stuff that's writing on the wall

There's rocks on the side saying "give it down."
Getting slower – got this package pulling like parabolic pounds
No credence given to the world en masse, trespass
With an immaculate pistol sitting callous in its hands

Nobody ever told it that it had to go down fighting
In a world un-aground with inappropriate lighting
Where these creatures find these bodies and they hide them really well
Swarm on footsteps that sound like driving into piled high bells

No one out there wants to live so no one out there needs to prove
So no one out there needs to make and no one out there needs to move
This no one doesn't want to die but even less for him to lose
Even less to join the dying wishes buried under shoes

Someone at the top of the city told it how to make a mark
Someone bottom'd woke a monster in the belly of a shark
Someone out in hell, they gathers pieces of the whole
Voices of the damned who found peace inside a hole

Then someone wrote rights for the world en large
Drew vanishing points, put some words in charge
Made so steeples of the theses can be written on cards
Or some lives in jars – fingerprints on bars

Convocative (Live You)

I got 2 girls in my trunk and all they talk about is sex
And a dog I found with seven collars hanging from its nails
I've been on this road with all these twits for something seven years
I'm rigged and I can't answer all this ringing in my ears.

I bought a house of mirrors; I stand in it all day and talk shit
I met a girl- I had to talk to her all day to walk with
I had to walk her to her house for all the thoughts to stalk with
Pumped my balls into her jaw for all the songs to rock with
Rock 'n Roll, Rock 'n Roll, Rock 'n Roll, I'm death

The bigger they're pupils are the more we can give eachother
Our lives don't like us so we'll go live another
Stand for years in the rain for these dreams of big boats
All the naughty words and pain never made our skin coats

My personality's a burden
And explanation is a curse
And introspection is absurd
And self defence is something worse
I make systems out of wolves

For all these signs for all these parks all I can see is standing sharks
All I see around these sharks is blood, saliva - body parts
I see that laying on the ground are thick, mechanic, beating hearts
Said "something foul happened here, but all I need's a place to park."

He spent a whole week in that building, squatting in the apartment next to hers. The walls were as thin as a stupid banana slice and filled with nothing, except maybe droplets of white, dirty water.

It was everywhere. It was lining his lungs, her lungs – everyone's.

He didn't intentionally try to spy on her, but information came to him anyway; information he recorded in a notepad he found in a rat's nest under his army cot.

He could hear her sniffing cocaine in one of her rooms. In another room he could hear her dancing. In a third room – the fucking third room – he could hear her punching holes in the walls. Somewhere in between she obsessed over the firefighter, a figure that was everything she was not. Where she stood, he created, and where she observed, he spoke enthusiastically. He was about as many things as he could, and as far as the Slave could tell, she was the entirety of nothing.

And then when she was in the outside world, she was an artist. She was different in every place she stood- phasing into different caricatures in every room - beyond sex and the trappings that turn strong people trivial. Colours of everything, right. A rainbow of life growing in a spiky vacuum.

With this plotted out on paper in front of him, he had her figured out but was nonetheless inspired by her system.

She invited him over once and he observed it firsthand. He put his head through one of her walls and swallowed an orb that made him feel like he was made of lizards. The feathers on their bird were at opposite ends, leaving them unable to connect in any real way; a man and a woman not doing what they should. Their bird lived in space.

Their bird was always exploding. She was always watching him. He was always watching her. Everything was relevant. Back then.⁸

The Professionals were *so interested* in his obsession, and even more than that, *her*.

"She proves me right. She makes me the most right person."

"I don't see how."

"Anything is everything. It's the law. Nobody seems to believe me but nobody reads anymore."

"A deviation doesn't prove the rule."

"You're going to try and take this from me, but you can't. His obsession with her only sweetens the deal. If he's ahead of the curve, and the everyman will eventually be where he is, then every person should react like he is reacting, so this means something. It's fulfilling the testament."

"Two anomalies not doing anything doesn't mean anything, much less everything."

"You're popular; get everyone to read the book. It's in there, you just need to read it and think about it. Don't make me out to be a librarian in this faith."

"Reading is a sign of strength."

"Come on. This is important. This is a signal. Something is changing; everything's gonna follow."

"You sound heretical. This is a dangerous tone of voice."

"Maybe I am. Maybe I should just shut up and admit that I'm an idiot. Right?"

"Maybe you should. If you're right then the whole church is wrong; what's more likely? Roll the dice on this one. Tell me what that lane looks like."

"Why're you bringing this up now? I've been talking about-"

⁸ Back when "the afterlife" was "the future." See: General Labour.

"Because when you hear it doesn't matter, right? All time's the same."

"I guess I'm just a stupid person then."

"No, you're onto something, but you're not right."

"Of course not."

Heaven's for Potheads (Invaders Eighty)

Refused to roll; I walked the rock - I called for help when I started to melt
Another girl, another talk, I buy, she sells; the head that fell
I'll see your clock and raise a rock to throw at pictures on a shelf
You're smoking hot, he's smoking cock, I'm smoking every fucking thing else

I'm in a car with liberal arts; these essays punch me in the teeth hole
I try so hard to get so far with this awful, bitter killionaire casino
They're in the stars I'm in a bar with blisters listed A to Z
I'll play the game with an appropriate name like "Pavement," "Modern," or "in bed."

A pen in hand's hand in a jar; just say goodbye to your social --
A pen and man's man in a car; turn the wheel clumsy with a --
For ten of them there's part of me that's killed by burning, screaming --
For ten of me there's one of them all hostage; swallowed by the --

The president wants my blood to ship to secret prisons
He said that it's so full of chemicals and visions it's a prism
For truth and justice and- and -- and but more like-like rape and schism
But it's all the same at the bottom line, or so's the local wisdom

I sold my soul for a library in my neck for further --
All buried in a war of an unholy sort
Ezekiel came out with intent to --
The only methamphetamine I need is --

The saxophones came so I killed me some
With Transylvanian knives and a Bahton Gun
Crackhead spread it like "you can't do that, son"
Then you must explain to me why the West was won

Fashionably Questionable

Clothing shop downtown has a cannibal to manage
The only way to walk past the impossible is passive
I'm all dressed in chains so it's impossible to vanish
I grabbed ketchup from your tracts for your fucking knuckle sandwich

Well I got no money and I'm dressed to confess
I break the ice with a story 'bout the-the watermarks on my vest
And my pants are too long and someone's at the other end
At this party and my pants-mate's my only friend

I pick the ugliest girl and say she should be a pin-up
Gonna make her a star; gonna make her hold her chin up
Hold her head so high that her lips can hold the blimps up
I can never get arrested; I'm just a capitalistic victim

Eraser Royale

Someone followed my lead, has me acting like a mirror cop
Some places you see salvation with a clear shot; here's not
There it ain't no justice until someone makes the beer stop
Hear a gear pop; show you what we think of your teardrops

At the Pogo Show blowing holes of smoke
Swagger forth and fro like dyslexic goals
Cameraman says "go" but I got no jokes
So they all went to heaven in a little row boat

So I escaped on a renegade treble clef and
Painted my body to a wall with scaryist method
Said painted their art with blood, still get no credit
Cause I died way back there in fifty seven.

I call 'em all milks and then I killed 'em all down
Open doors let my essence spill all over the town
Now this place is poorly translated deathwish
Just a little quick switch when the chips are down

Count my wrecking crew like one, like two
Disappear like poof into avian flu
Now I know my imagination just ain't that cool
Sickos left me here to clean the room

And "room" I used just in figured rhyme
4 walls en masse all around my life
And I got no wife but now I got this knife
And I always wondered what being a rockstar's like.

They had to hear her story just to leave her there
All that milky blood in her beat up hair
All the children died and the clock just stared
They watched whole mess burn in a leather chair

They didn't take my mind but they took my game
You know I got no say but I got this name
I'm this faceless guy with no way to claim
They'll kill my world and I'll take the blame

I didn't do this mess but I live here so
I fear the mercury in their meter hole
I'm a blown up meal; I'm a peeled goat
I unleashed unclean upon the world

L.S.D. (Live. Sleep. Die.)

This life is a eulogy that's exclaimed on a shirt
I don't believe in plurals, it's all *apostrophe*
Like all my glorious contemplates spell ---

Stuck in the bunker / Amongst the mews and wails
I just took enough acid / To confuse a whale

If I only had a dime for every angel I anguished
Wow - the future seems bleaker than my homicidal fog
I'll never have the time to find crystals in acid
My buried hatchets came back in a glorious zombie apocalypse

While I'm here I need an enemy to identify with
Infamy dressed in majesty- eternal lipless hiss
A little bitter cavalry assures me it exists
Inhales prophets disappeared ; the cattle of the wits

No salvation, *uh no* quick talk
Just another old man straight doing the crip walk
Faux prognosis, mass hypnosis
No control; folded in the locust

How am I supposed to live working next to death?
Never can't sow no gold when you're holding your breath
No love; you can't touch me when I'm hitting my chest
I'll take all of your bullets; you can keep what's left

I give up; gave in, I won't play this game
All these drugs mean nothing- they all sound the same
And these wish-talking hippies think they know my name
I can't deal with these art people carrying flames

I bowed out three million minutes ago
I'll just sit over here where the pyramids grow
I'd like to wake up with something to give
But I always go to bed with one fewer rib

There's a high for goodbyes
There's a high for fights
There's a high for success

Everyone's high at night

There's a carousel full of cats as black as night
The tax is right, inspire riot by smaller candle light
They all know me but I ain't been around here
But who am I? There's just a clown in the mirror

I'm just one more excuse for a heartless motherfucker
Just 5 blind suckers, all spittlepunch each other's mother
There's just no room in this world, guess the wise don't get a nod
I got a god complex, now I need a complex god
Making awesome metaphors is a complex job
And working with death and sobriety is an ominous job

So no guns, no love; now I'm living in a truck
Full of signs that read "some kid's up fucked"
I've lived this life now I'm burdening a flood
It's a rising tide that's made of blood
I need a girl cause there's two i's in addiction
An accomplice to tunnel through this self infliction
I drop to my knees and I pray to who'll pay most
Now her esteem is falling; I forgot to bring a raincoat

I see, dirty, cold glass
Life's a series of highs
All these lights fly past
I just live, sleep, die

The Firefighter

There's the Marriage McPiano of death and waste
Then the firefighter, the firefighter
They sweet cherry scene of a Biblic gaffe
Then the firefighter, the firefighter

You're a road, he's a car
That's that
In the dark unknown, he's a star
That's that
A lone marble throne at the bar
That's that
He climbs a ladder to the fire
That's that

He's had every job
Yes; the man for the job
Filling every room and lapse
He will make the banner
And write the book
But he will not greet you back
That's that
You know, he's built some things
He's built so many things
You can see them, as a matter of fact
In the back

Whatever you are
Firefighter plus one
Whatever you do
Has already been done
I saw him smile at that fire
And reinvent the plane
He's the name of the game
That's that

The everyman
A Rosetta stone
Go rattle his bones at the block
A modest smile
An honest day's work

The smoke will rise to the top

On the last day with A Transient, he saw her killing a giant green slime monster outside their building. She had a tattoo of a dog on every limb of her body; he'd seen her administer them in a fourth room she kept hidden behind a hidden compartment and red, red rug. He was leaning deep, as was his custom. She was throwing junk and bits of shrapnel at its stomach. Its colour sank dark, and low, and before long it spread out dead and poisoned.

He saw her mouth words to songs she couldn't sing because her lungs had long ago turned to stone. While she could speak and create devices to make noises for her, she could not improvise within any reasonable sphere of truth.

The words she mouthed were fragments of the story of her life. While she tattooed herself with images so familiar to him, he rearranged her anecdotes into a fairly competent narrative.

He learned that she was raped by the ghost of the illegitimate child of nature and death. She was impregnated with the error of life and gave birth to a scene that would obsess with cultural anomalies; the aesthetic of the error of life. She chose to keep the bastard culture around to generate a sort of discomfort that was unique to the situation. She would explain that it cheapened the rape.

Much like she cheapened life by coming back from the dead.

Truly she existed to cheapen existence.

"Would you look at that," said the Slave.

A Transient didn't say anything, as she rarely replied; she wasn't known to relinquish her dominant position, except maybe for the firefighter. He still wanted to fuck her, but he accepted that sad reality like he accepted death, and put it over by his sideburns.

"It's time to go," she said, towering over the vanquished slime monster.

"Where you going?" he asked. She didn't reply.

"Right, okay, but please, just let me know. I need to go somewhere. You've got it all sorted out."

She was already walking away, and in an uncharacteristic show of humanity, spoke back:

"We're in the same place but we can't be the same person."⁹

"I can't be seventeen fucking people like you are! We can make one work!"

She was already at the intersection, crossing the street. Once she was clear of the road, her third floor apartment erupted in a giant fireball, exploding out over the road. The Slave crumbled to the ground, covering his head from the raining debris. The fire illuminated the area beyond the hospital-yellow lights, painting fury on the two Professionals who were still watching him with fixed expressions. He stood to his feet and stared back.

"Leave me the fuck alone!" he screamed. They didn't reply.

He pulled his notebook from his back pocket and flipped to a page in the middle. A note read: "Nobody in this world replies," beneath it a line of tick-marks. He pulled a pencil from his left pocket and drew another notch on the page.

"Fuck this guy. This is a doomed mission; there is no future."

"If we give up then we'll never know. If we never know then we might be tricked into escapism, and then the vaklyries will infiltrate the church and we'll get dead."

"Maybe we're the heroes, then. Maybe we'll be the idols of the new world."

"Next they'll put us on a mission on what it means to be the heroes of a world where everyone is passive and dying."

"You can be Blasphemy Man."

⁹ "This life is a snide falsetto." – Joker Grasshopper.

"I'm not trying to say it like that. I'm just trying to illustrate how we shouldn't want that mission."

"Fuck you I don't want that mission."

"They're gonna read about this in the history books."

The Seven Palms of Homicide

I've seen men *en mobb* pretend to die
Pickaxemen bicker; fly versus fly
Well the dirty rise up, the lighthouse subsides
They look at the moon; the devil's eye in the sky

I've lived in the music where the wise are kept under
Visions of violence; to rape and wonder
How could it come to this? One can only plunder
Recycled anthems like rolling thunder

There's a press that makes them dirty, you
Might as well follow suit, you're in this too
Synapses fired on, burned to a crisp
By things of turning- pumping fists

They painted the night over beams of scars
Famous men with rights; abysmal pillars
There's a rebel in here with no new thoughts
There's a face in there, might as well be --

They got to me like I got to pain
I had their scent; gotta get to fame
Gotta get the fruits; gotta make a name
Seems the path to fame is paved in flames

They turned it all into fever'd feelin'
A world of black and danger; eveninging
Over our heads like despoted fingers
They're all madmenish; they're all rock 'n roll singers

I've seen their ground zero – it's beautiful
It's measured, washed and musical,
Thysy "There's nothing wrong with our rotting throng-
-all these people want is bitter songs"

I'm made debted to murder, sex, and stuff
Filled up- it's like I'm made of love
I saw the gear that they brought to me
They didn't turn the thing – that shit was me

I've said no more, I'll say it no more
The slaves want whores what carry swords
Detox maymorrow – a rich slut or a poor whore
What else do you people pay me for?

To fold, collapse – it's the only way
To leave the scene, to beat their game
I'm up to here with a million ways
To play and avoid a nameless grave

I'll use their mynnihilation card
To split me middle– a flurry of coins
No drugs, no guns, no revolution
Popular upstart: no solution

I might mention a girl
I might write about her
But it's just a word
The only other option's absurd

She is not a world
There's no power in form
Existence is a liability
For infinity worms

I said bigger than life, smaller than a game
It'll thrive in that noplac, there without a name

She's an arm on a tentacle that's made of exploding graves

This is how you talk to life
This is how you forget to talk

You can't make me wanna die no more
You can't make me wanna be high no more
You can't make me wanna confide no more
In your heroes; won't take sides no more
I'm out.

Belay Vs. The Bureaucracy

I look at gods and devils like I look at Pepsi and Coke
I look at a hustle like I look at a jig – it's cash
I look at my fight like I look at a con
I can't see the forest for the plan'et

How to Soul

I climbed to the top of an iceberg
Pole
I stand at the summit, picture frame
A hole
I look at the horizon; forever
No more
I got greedy and I tripped, here comes the pain
Oh no

Il love the way their pretty figured arc floats all around
An'I love the way the creatures finger lick without a sound
I just love the way it makes machines; they eat them by-
-the pound, oh
I love the ageless combat, I love this –
- crazy town, no

A dozen cold dreams fly through my brain
The names of the Earth fall in drops of gold rain
The water's like mist and I just phase through
The mountain of ice just descended and grew

The aliens came down
Oh, they broke me into parts
So I'm sewn around the crown
The fuckers portioned out my heart
They turned my fingers into darts

I love you – love him
If you love your guts
Guts are base – the first sin
This sin is guts as rust

I found the ashes of a pharaoh living in the sand
Dug up to my elbow; living in a can
Singin' a song, he's thinkin' of a plan
Gonna get a body, get back at the man

What killed him and turned him into little flakes?
Extortion, possession- hell, whatever it takes

Well he's got more soul than I've got snakes
But I got so many snakes; there's just so many snakes

And it got me thinking, but not-that-hard
See I've got no soul but I got some scars
And I've been told they're the same damn thing
But I was told that by some wolf-man thing

I read a book on how it doesn't make sense
And then I wrote a book that agreed, and since
Two big books beats one true sound
I just dropped the topic and wandered around

I came to the beach on a tip from the wind
Didn't say much – it didn't say a thing
But it didn't really have to; it's all in the attitude
So I walked down yonder singing songs full of gratitude

The ocean darked blacker but the ice brighted whiter
The polarities collided in the only subscriber
I am back for the moment but I miss the misrepresentation of life
My entire life has been shaved into a witness to these facts

I need success; it's how I measure my wealth
Of self, in turn I measure my shelves
On shelves I place treasures bought and sold
But I never sell so I might as well
This is your life.

Skip town in tow of a can of sand
I need a soul and he needs his man
Get a little rowboat and a velvet van
And a book I wrote; it just hit the stands

We'll never find noone, we'll just follow the sun
We'll drive up buildings just for fun
Take low roads plural, never one
Don't believe in soul, but I like to run

There is no bottom, just the fact
That I fell off, and that is that

Divorce Song

Oven Maison
Cold is season
I can't see the lakedrops
Tongues are paving
Screaming, saying
"Go until the pain stops."

I remember this old house
I remember what you used to be
Hemlock served in small amounts
You suffered all you meant to me

Beautiful music made with broken
Tins and wires, burying
Boxes filled with pretty teeth
Dirty fingerprints digging in

I Am the Paradise Bomb

Long, scary devil bones
I am the hatred metronome
They made a bomb, I made it long
I used my spit to write this song

All I want is to break you down
You scream for them, you scream it loud
I built this revolution plough
I coil on idiots in the crowd

Soliloquy of a Moving House

Chimneys live by taking it in blood
Animals fighting – raking on the wood
More brains than drywall – tenants understood
No room for peoples hating on the good

They watched their highway peel away
They searched like blind men feeling clay
And perched up high, or so they say
Were spheres, but they don't work today

They're Prisoner Orbwise

The sun is always shining here
The scum has started blinding here
They're buying humans – sign it there
They're crying – puking – they didn't care

Bewitch those citizens – carelessness
These peoples, they embarrass us
A slavish doctor cares for us
A slavish hunger scaring us
Erroneous.

Salt Peter Cetc.

My name is Salt Peter; I'm the coolest dude
And all I like to do is cook stupid food
I got a salty steak, I got rice alfredo
I got chocolate and lavender shrimp tornadoes

I carved thing of cheese to look like a butt
I fill potatoes with taco stuff and sew it shut
With long thin strips of weak green onion
I will feed ye from a penis oven

A bucket of champagne and chicken's blood
Egg Benedict and chilli soufflé
A pie shaped like South America
5 pounds of pork charred with marmalade

Okay, I got chicken beaks soaking in 7 Up
Roll up pancakes in a carpet and throw from a moving train
I yell "change places!" and the kitchen shifts
I yell "land's end!" and the kitchen splits

I yelled at a microwave cause I'm the best
I deep fried a coat because I'm the best
I gave a full table cold turkey skin
For dessert they got children's medicine

I pay for my car and I pay for my wife
I pay for my shack and my corn cob pipe
I pay for a hat two sizes too big
I pay for my dusty judge's wig

I'm the best cook and I run the food
I use my own broom; I'm not usually rude
My whole staff, they stomp and clap
The plates get cleaned and that is that

Full Clip, Halve Handed

You're looking for unbinding but no such luck
Cause all I wanna do get your face fuck upped

Brains condensed to punching sounds
Eyes drip out like to mushroom clouds
Skin ripped messy by rusty hooks
Your jaw is broken like an open book

Teeth kicked down your swollen throat
You vomit up blood and the shit you ate
I'm biting on your nose like a sad grey goat
I drive a knife in to compensate

I broke your leg and the bone's exposed
I stomp on your chest and it out explodes
They acid drips down and your body corrodes
Your flesh all melts – only worms'll know

In the stuff of death, the sum of life, say Belay:
"God is a woman
Death is a witch
The Devil is a slut
And life's a bitch"

Hitsville U.S.A.

I got a stethoscope trained in radio ten
They got dinosaurs trained on the movements of their hands
One time I wrote a song
One time they sang along
One time they tracked me down and said they'd put me in a lab

Alls I got is this mic and stand
Alls I want is songs that I can stand
Bursting with yellocks
First aid and hemlock
Reviewing the cradle where liberty fell

Unhand me – my arms! – you're just milky and sad
Back alley lashing; they guilt me, I'm mad
I'm clinging so tightly to my magic trinkets
I should maybe shut up – no, I dare not think it.

Welcome to Hitsville and its various chores
They'll shut you out like nefarious jurors
Mobs are honking like hilarious pores
Then they're piling on you like the scariest sores

They bought my face but I can keep my band
They took our name but we retain our hands
I'm all back on the street where I wrote my best shit
Some oil drums, some horns, and sticks

The only way in is a communist stroke
The only way out is through poisonous roads
Musical chairs – I said it – all literal notes
Do you understand? They're some oily folk

The Duke Is Dead

It came at me like a carved up frame
Like a homicidal man who got the car again
I lay there bleeding on the side of the road
Never try to dig a hole; should never try to take control
I watch a battery of vultures fly out of a swamp

I can never escape the mist what's black as death
It's naught but pictures; I'm not what's left
Then I drew a crooked circle where the bridge collapsed
But demons don't stop – it's now a mass attack
Like the never-ending trail of birds, of birds

It got into my brain and peeled the curtains back
Pulled the lever on the lights save for those at the back
So many cold fingers up and down my back
It always comes back; it'll always come back
They circle back; they're as silent as a casket

The duke is dead and so the birds live twice
They tried to funnel them into a line
You cannot control what is not inside
In cycles in the night, they will fly and fly

Faustian Miscarriage
(Purity of You through Eating your Self)

“There’s a million slaves on a million tapes
All filling their heads with ambivalent snakes
No food to create; they’ll just balance the plates
Here I’m stuck on a fence between pity and hate”

They gave me politics so I gave them irony
So they gave me part of it so I gave them all of me
Then I gave you two harlequins, you gave me an army
Then you gave them hell cause I made it a policy

I found a fiery romance in a dead computer
I knew her from before when she was cooler and looser
Her gigabytes fought with my millionth wife
I deleted their minds for the millionth time

The women were men
With gigantic heads
A box a closet a world
Full of skeletons

They all wore tall and crooked hats
Had laser fights inside the city
Crept around, they looked like cats
All ghosts, they’re frozen; sick and gritty

The maker didn’t know
How computers worked
Just gave a dumpster a mouth
Like some furious jerk

I fed a man another man
I did what only mothers can
We’re bothers; one is eating hands
We’re on a different planet, man

He was god, I made it good
He rose; he nods at the bloody wood
I broke him like I said I would
He only does what I say he should

I weighed no weight in calling out
I found no cash in falling down
I chased clichés with a longish rope
I only paused to tell a joke

He's slave to stories, only old
I'm slave to tales, cold and bold
I raised the stakes in a pit of snakes
This something old; I'm in control

When A Transient disappeared into the night, the Slave made a mad dash towards the city limits in the first direction he could think of. He ran with the reckless abandon of an armageddon obsessive compulsive. He broke through nature's threshold and became one with the prevailing winds, stopping only when he was satisfied with his destination. It just so happened that the direction his dash was directed took him towards the docks, a spot not far from a massive shipwrecked freighter.

He wasn't an idiot; he knew where he was and who was inside. There were die-hard Bird Man fanatics who drafted up newsletters about him, filled with short stories, poems, editorials, theories, and listings for musicians inspired by the Bird Man and his work. They knew he was the mask for their scene, and their scene was in itself a membrane of bandages that served the same purpose.

The Slave was living in the cusp of the Bird Man Mania Microcosm. He knew what the fuck was in that ship. He knew he had to talk some shit about a wardrobe change maybe.

Yeah so the story goes that he knocked on the hull near a jagged opening that acted as the main entrance. Before long, the haunting, slender visage emerged from the muggy darkness. "Whoever you are, cheque's in the mail!" screamed the Bird Man.¹⁰

"I'm not here about money."

"That's a dirty rotten lie. Everyone's everywhere for money. If it wasn't money and it was flour you'd be there for flour. You want to exchange something. What do you want that's not easy, fun money?"

"Um... Help...?"

The Bird Man crossed his arms and raised his head, the long beak arcing so that the point hung like an arrow the Slave's psyche.

"How can I help you if you can't help yourself?"

"If everyone helped themselves then help wouldn't exist."

"Neither would charity."

"You're finishing my argument for me. And... thank you?"

The Bird Man stepped backwards into the back blackness, disappearing from sight.

"Okay... I'm coming in then. If that's okay don't say anything."

With some silence.

"Alright then..."

The Slave entered the ancient freighter, drunk on the courage that flowed freely at the end of the world.

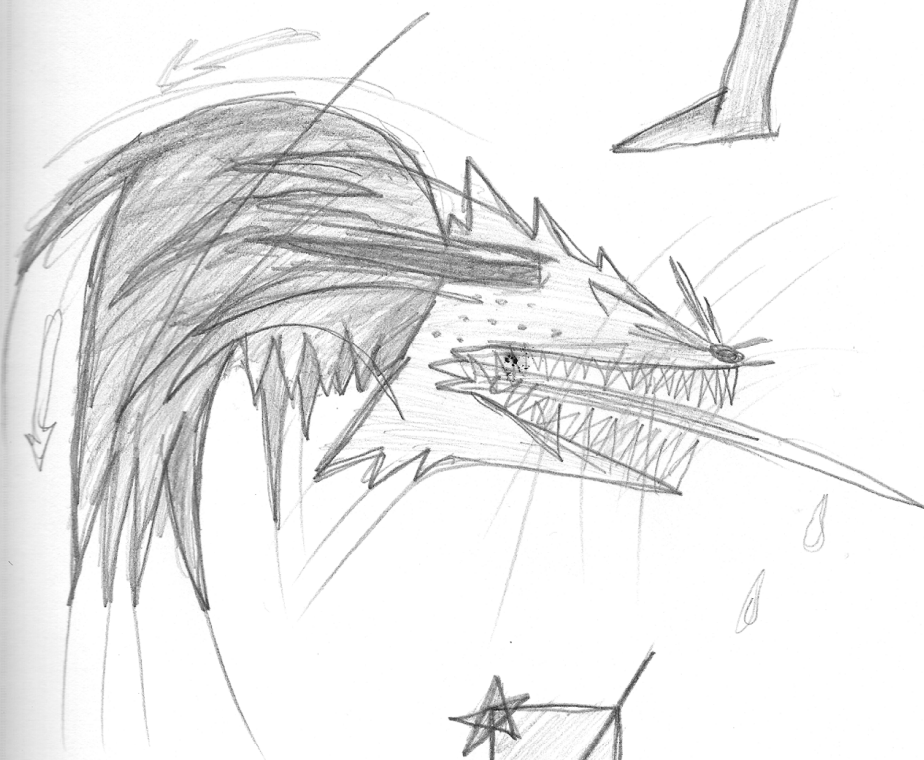
There was nary a moment where it wasn't raining out there, even a little bit. Rusted girders fallen at extreme angles blocked entry to *most probably* useful avenues. Through these blockades you could see hyenas walking silently through the hallways. Water dripped through holes widening by decay and rust. There was junk everywhere, which was so likely that it need not be mentioned.

The Slave was following the misleading sound of footsteps through a maze of hallways and holes blown / caved in the walls.

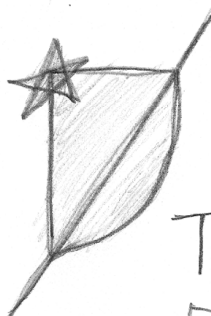
¹⁰ See: Cheque's In The Mail?



WHISKY PAGE



Catharsis
Rat



Thought
Police

WHISKY PAGE

The Damn

Enough spirit and spit thick to hang a noose on
I call buldipshit on your revolution
I'm your corporate daddy; lean up the missiles
And tap your clips and pump your pistols

Fold the flag; feel the sting of sorrow
Up high I'll sing like there's no tomorrow
My fingers snap like lightning cracks
Your boys fall back in gaseous masks

The grand illusion; the words and stage
Unholy union of lurch and sage
The idiots come like blood; deep purple rage
There's no turning back this burning page

A muse's forlorn bitter bread
She eats their work, she's unimpressed
I made her dead, a hearse, they said
An empty cave inside her head

A bastard's city all bent and sick
Monument face of a lunatic
I am the blood, I am the bone
A pipe; a head for a telephone

If I tell you how to live
It's all part of the trick
Everything I say is a lie
Unless I say it's not
I am the blood, I am the bone

Broadway Woman Song

One time I punched a woman
"And I bet she hit the ground!"
Some are hotter than an oven
"They all make irritating sounds!"

Well their bones are weak and brittle
"Made of bullshit to the pound!"
Oh their hands are oh so little
"Till their eyes roll right aroooooooooound!"

"Well I tell ya nothing you do's good enough
For them, that coven of nefarious sluts
If their mood overfloweth, their eyes deceive
And before you know it teething like you wouldn't believe!"

Well they're not so bad, this one tried to kill me
"Aw they kill us all slowly, you better believe it!"
She always said she's bi-polar, maybe she'll forgive me
"Just because she diagnosed herself, it doesn't mean she means it!"

16 Bars and Fifty Cages

I could see the nouns trembling inside of her throat
She said they went off similar in a familiar row boat
She had that treasure and no one knows
Where she put it, in lieu a cryptic note

I coaxed her into some recollection
Sixteen bars, she said, and fifty cages
She studied dead texts of avalanches
No'jectives and using a fun inflection

Every word a quest, every verb a vest
Dressed up, press my hands against her breasts
She knew the secret to life in space
I calmly held a knife against her face

She told me where to dig, and I had to dig up
Whispered maps and things that had my hair sit up
I was looking for a cage with the antidote in it
All the world's her head - find a place to poke in it

She wrote the DNA of the entire planet
She kneeled to me and I knew she couldn't stand it
She's as close to god as we'll get around here
I'm closer to Columbus cause I got around her- HA

She tricked me cause we are all tricked cause
They'll only remember what I did when paused
I've seen her before, so I say it, I must
"The Woman" is a projection from beneath the Earth's crust

The Killer's Riddle

He filled my glass up with drugs
Like one and two
Got a bomb and hugged it
I'm done, kaboom

This Bank of Academia
Seven, Eight
Gonna blow all their guts out
Swimming in lakes

Of blood, my ransom
Three and Four
So much panic they're bleeding
Screaming pores

All I want's my cup back
Four and five
This bomb's the best
I'm more alive

I line them up there
Quotation marks
Took the senator and punched him
Through his coat and heart

My glass is half empty
My fist is half full
With brains and bones
And patches of skull

I'm the hostage king
I want whatever's on tap
I kill for the drink
Spill it in my lap

I'm drunk on you
You shake with fear
Who am I, then?
Why am I here?

Vicious Victorious

I can't remember being seven
But I remember someone else being seven
All of a sudden, a hurricane, big branches, torn tires
Forest fires, a man on stilts suspended by four wires

This kid tried to get me and break me down
Just a little devil all messy, making sounds
He pounded me with cases that were caked in crowns
A flatline outlined in chalk that bounces

I tangled with him once in the belly of a whale
And a spaceship; bind like jelly to a snail
I picked up the phone and I put my hand to it
Made my body like a tunnel so's I could put a plan through it

I used someone else's memories to load a gun
Pointed it at the kid and blowed out his tongue
He came back like a cat just the following day
All hope drained out fast; I'm hollowing clay

The past and more past just keep exploding
I hate this kid and I know he knows it
He's all on my back and he's so ferocious
My brain can't beat him and his ghostish motions

All good children come from the ocean
The ferocious come from the subways, mostly
Sure he felt wet but he smelled like brick
Waited till I fucked up just to give me shit

He lived by the stories of gods and devils
I lived by the laws of science and the sick
Good boy making progress with nefarious devices
He did the good with the bad, or so he was tricked

He's dead, I said it, I'll say it again
He's dead, vendetta, never clean again
He's dead, insignias of perverts on his hands
He's dead, he took our words and played with them, man

The Year that Never Happened

You can never go home.

It turned out love just wasn't enough
No deed's undone; oh the wolves will come
Eyes at the edge of cliffs look across
A sea of lively waving palms what
Lost their heightened diamond things

The town as dark, all the phones were ringing
One maybe two, it's impossible to tell
Footsteps; slamming death's head against a bell
The trees were curved when the graves were found
Their children disappeared without a sound

They didn't look hard; walked into the back yard
In the forest; oh, the woods, in the darkest part
Maybe seventeen dead; numbers they forget
Eaten and touched; bended up and bled
Couldn't touch their cuts, they just cradled their heads
They brought the night and it never left

It's the minds of men with the knives of gods
They imagined approved of their violent laws
At the edge of that cliff, high above an abyss
They touched velvet faces with their vinyl hands

They will never ever kill what it was they killed
To life, never empty what they filled
With their muddy palms they crushed a bitter lie
To the wind they threw it and they called it their life

Before long he caught up with the Bird Man, who was standing before a door opening into a massive circular room filled with objects conventionally found in a laboratory.

"This is the mausoleum," explained the Bird Man. "This is where the magic happens."

"What are you working on in here?"

"Ain't you heard the stories?"

"I heard you were building a spaceship. Someone was saying you were building a giant crystal skull."

"My bones are already made of crystal. What kind of sense does that make?"

"I agree. I agree with that."

"It's a machine. It's gonna change everything."

Bird Man stepped down into the room, walking between long lines of tables covered in electric components and schematics.

"What's it for? How could it change everything?"

"If you made it here then you have an idea. You're not here for money; you're here for something metaphysical."

"I wouldn't say that. Just information or... wisdom, a solution..."

"That's what I mean. We can trade these things. We can make these things real."

"Is that what... the machine?"

At the end of the long line of tables, workstations, and man-sized devices, there was a huge black box roughly the size of a house or two.

"It's the Great Doom Machine."¹¹

The Professionals were drinking coffee in an unfamiliar room.

"We've got two parts here; the guy and the girl. We don't have enough to compile a report yet.

We haven't really learned anything."

"We've seen the future; it's them. We've seen two possibilities, so right now, there's a 200% chance that the population will self destruct. We need to bring them into the thing."

"We could let them all die. Everyone seems okay with that."

"Well, you know, we can't survive without the world. Just because we've outsmarted them doesn't mean we're better than them."

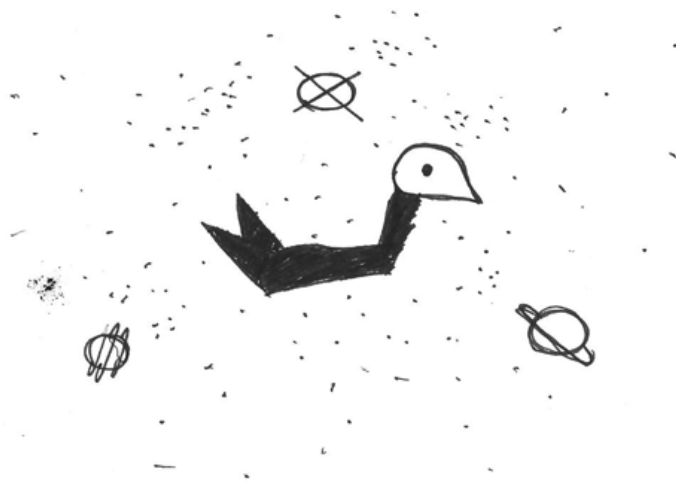
"Yes it does. That's exactly what it is."

"You're right. I must be a stupid person."

"We're the kings. There's only one thing to believe in, and there's only one story to tell, and there's only one thing that lives forever, and that's the weakness."

"I'm a stupid idiot."

¹¹ See: Diag. 7.



WHISK ~~WHISKY PAGE~~ ~~WHISKY PAGE~~ WHISKY PAGE

GentleMan



GenteMen



Diag. 7

Balacava the Bird

Everyone in this Culture
Is obsessed with high school
Virgins and gunshots
The old you isn't cool

The old you looked mad
The old you acted classless
The old you's is unaware
You know the old you didn't care

The old you didn't talk
To strangers just to agree
Explain the same and nod your heads
On politics and poverty

No time to be radical
The colours fade to lame lines
Rebels once were magical
They taxed me for my time

The old you's music sucked
Yeah the old you's movies sucked
"I liked that shit at seventeen,
you like that now you fucking suck"
You're melting like Hollywood
"That shit's fucked up"

High school's where it started
In North America
I told him everything's retarded
"But it's worth the marathon"

You grew up into hangars
"At least I got some cool clothes"
There's nothing on them, they're just tangled
"I'm eating all my school notes"

What the hell is up, kids / I'm the new substitute / I'm gonna drop into your heads / Like a
lubed parachute / And I'm taking this position / Like a signal flare / Lighting a warning sign / A
hectare in the air

You're all gonna grow up / And it's as bad as it sounds / I wrote a book about it once / But I
won't get into that now / I'll write my name on the board / Pronounced Joker Grasshopper /
Here's a sheet, pass it over / And make your name, mark, or word

Now when you get old / They want yer cash / Put it in a sock / Or in yer hat / And if they bill you
/ Ye shouldn't fret / Just throw it out / And they'll forget
They'll call ye fat / Or maybe insane / But they are rich / And they will say / Just about anything
/ To get yer cash / So take yer hands / Off of yer hat
Now a few of you look bored / Or maybe you're all hungover / I'll remind you that you're
children / And you should all know better / And I know you all got money / So this ain't no thing
/ But m'name is mud / So open yer fuckin' eye!
Y'should be wary of the people who yell or approach you / Or anyone who sells themselves to
mentor, teach, 'r coach you / In my case, you're supposed to listen, and if you don't then y'are
forced to / So says the government, the thing that loves to hold you, not support you
You can do what you want, but not like what you do / You will work for yer
roof and yer tie and yer shoes / Y'see, the cycle looks blue but will move down to gray / And
then soon you can't move like some inhumane clay
And'm speaking in rhyme cause I don't have a band / And I know y'don't like me cause I'm not
quite a man / You need not'ent to shiver and need not'ent to frown / I'm just here for a day
while that guy's out of town
Or maybe he's dead, cause'm no kind of knower / I read what yer learning and it's nothing but
shit / Cause the man wants you canned and dressed up like his hand / To rob and insult you and
tender demands
I've seen five beautiful people in my whole life / And oily men make robots from their trophy
wives / Cars keep growing with the bottles and cuffs / They say that we're wrong while they're
stealing our stuff
I can see you look scared and that's just what I want / I'm gonna leave through the window and
run 'cross the lawn / But remember my face and know one day I'll change / So don't retype the
notes, just go bookmark the page
Grow up / I'm out!

PEOPLE NOSTYLE

Despite what you may think
I've never written about people
Like I've never drawn a picture of pencils
And I've polished that point so long it's a crystal
I'll shoot for the stars but success is cyclical

I'm stupid, but far from retarded
I just traded in my Bluetooth for a brand new Tardis
I'm calling a mulligan on the first 18 years of my life
I don't remember anything.
I'm a taxi for coughs manifested as piles of rice
I guess I like to write but I hate to waste paper.
It's humans. The day mother nature fucked father death.

I've spent the last three hours sitting here drinking vodka out of a paper cup.
Then I filled a syringe with vodka and shot it up my dick.
I've fashioned a game out of abstract clues, but I am beginning to
Think that I'm losing track of what I'm supposed to do.
So, sitting here with this paper cup, I'm surrounded by people I don't
Know.
And they've all been invited here, and they want something.
"We wanna dropkick your whole soul right through the goal hole."
After they kick my ass with stolen boots.
The axis of evil is just an axis of people / With their dreams pigeonholed inside of keyholes and
peepholes

And I have nobody to blame but myself.
But if you take a photograph of it, then we can be sure I did it for a reason.
I believe not in the reality of the fact I'm saying, but the reality of me saying the fact.
And in one hand a woman, and in the other a gun, and in my mouth a stone.

The Messiah's Chain Prayer

/Trust Nobodon/ and its infinite variance
And its merciless parents and its necessary merits
Unnecessary perils; a hurricane's surely entailed
The isolation, the chain, the calm and the larynx

Gods pray to peoples to ignite the redecided
We pray for safety to the faces that we see in our dreams
All great men walk the line coloured death and invention
These parties must atone with nonexistence and greed

That law, these laws
Come from a place
That law, these laws
Come from a place

He trusted no man; chose directing and hell
Participate in anti materialized contrary rules
Everything is wrong, but not what the end expelled
Atonement with the father made of mirrors and puke

"I'm the king of this shit / But I'm a buck in space /
You love the human race / Shut your fug-king face!"

The man made of islands is like a planet for pain
His brain carries words like terrain carries rain
In the quest to be a pilot he lost control so he will fly it
Intro mysterious catastrophe; like news, like calm and quiet
He didn't believe in revolution
He believed in the universe
He believed in self
He melted on the inside

He's become the words
He's within the mass
He left his tumours
Spinning in the past

Angry Baby in a Manhole

She will pace the tunnels
Until her legs are a plunderful massacre
Shrill beams of light
Will sweep across her figure
Trace filthy mascara

The walls close in slow
As the slime compounds
And so her skin will show
Her future's sores and holes

She never learned how to climb
She never learned how to talk
She only conjured how to mime
To the climate as she walked

She walked back and forth
Prison familiar omnipresence
Every day is the same
Every day is the same
And every day is the same

She can see shadows phasing
Left and right or up and down or in and out
It's so amazing upon the pavement
She listens to distant people shout

Nothing has a name
I tell you nothing has a face
No, nothing makes sense
Dreams, times and places

Conspiracy Nostyle

I like to drink juice
And it's as simple as that
I did it once cause nonce was never enough
It's conspiracy juice; once more, conspiracy juice

"I drink it in," he said
I didn't say shit, thinking; well, I wasn't thinking
I assumed he thought in free form so he liked his shit in tea form
Well he sold me on the reform; had it hold me like an acorn

He told me jokes that made little sense; the man who would later get me drunk on the stuff.
So he said this:

"So what do you call Caesar's most trusted friend?"
And he said "Brute-ly honest."
And I adjusted my tie.
And then he said:
"What do you call an ironic rainbow?"
And then he explained it as: "Gang warfare."
And I immediately popped my collar.

The teeth of unrest
Lest microscopic flakes in it
The truth tasted used
It was what they drank of it

It was a cycle like fuck
A frightful rifle like fuck
It was a few things like fuck
No new things like fuck

Police Nostyle

I saw a policewoman who was a prism prison
She had twenty men inside of her
A couple dogs on her back, her back, her
Skin like bark, large; conflict writ larger

I walked around town feeling like the beginning of Bad Santa and the end of American Psycho
She waved a flag of unity to bring the rain down on me
I was terrified for my life
They stared down on, hit hard like rain
They knew I shouldn't be here
They wondered how I got here
I could see those like her on her
Imagination like her father

And then on the corner across the street
I saw myself reading oblivionlessly

I was moving irrationally in an infinite loop
Reading a newspaper by a telephone booth

Voyeurism like conspiracy
No taste unlike before, ya know
They look at me, I watch myself
So what the fuck am I here for?
Why do I become what I... hate? Hate deplore?

So I cast hateplore all on the weirdness
There's nothing more that I, you know, wanna learn
I'm drunk and genius; stupid and fearless
Yours truly, fucking the police

Genius NoStyle

I'm telling ya the next day, on the other hand
It was like divine comedy colliding with infinite jest
In the, uh, in a subway tunnel shaped like an ampersand
Outcrack the world's plan for a master man

See I felt like the daddy of a paradoxitical policewoman
I felt like I was living in the bell of the church of reflex
Just an introspective pinhead indecisive like a swingset

I mean, there was a fog, right; the kind of mystery that manifests
Got a pair of cement boots and three hats flatter than pamphlets
I got, uh, I got, uh; all I got is what the world made me into
I wondered aloud who was pulling the strings; who's the baby eating flu?

I asked manifestations that rose from the ground who was in control
I couldn't understand them because their faces were made of swamp
I saw in them the death of me and everything I had worked towards
I saw myself in the victims
Is what I'm trying to say

I didn't help them because I felt that there were more pressing questions to be asked
I didn't help myself because I was convinced that confusion was where to find my answers
I was in an empty bowling alley, driving around in a go cart breaking apart mannequins with a hockey stick
I was on the roof shooting red balloons that rose out of open manholes with the same white rifle I mentioned earlier
I used components of what they gave me to build a machine to make a new sort of sense
I marketed it in the fog; made a house out of a job
Like I like to drink juice
And it can be as simple as that

General Labour NoStyle

When you die you wash dishes press buttons life boxes move boxes open book close book turn on turn off.

When you die you work one day and you work another and then you work one more than then you start again.

When you die, it's general labour.

When you die, it's tasks with no schematic.

When you die, nobody tells you what's going on.

When you die, everything seems useless.

When you die, you don't know why you're still around.

When you die, you might quit, and you might come back. But it's not guaranteed.

But to do that you have to find a new job.

And you have to want to go. You have to be out the door when you take your clothes off.

A statue of limitations collecting icicles that fly by all the time.

Your death is like your life because it's all you have to work with.

You can quit or get yourself fired, but it's pretty much

The same

Fucking

Thing.

And you'll be amazed with what people get away with.

And you'll be even more amazed at how everything works.

Wait until you see what's expected of you.

You open the briefcase, you close the briefcase, you carry the briefcase.

You can never drop the briefcase.

We all pull from the same pool; this prevailing theme.

Your afterlife is full of hammers to toil forever in nonexistence.

You will always have your pride.

Hammers break things, but dead people can't use them.

You have to bring your pride.

Howl

I love the prison
I love the steel
The bars are gone
But the sleep is real

Howl Pt. II

I live in a lake
I live in the dirt
I hate being wet
But waiting is worse

Howl Pt. III

I don't live here
These aren't my things
I never woke up
I must be asleep

Howl Pt. IV

I'm stolen away
I'm lost in the lowth
The world is gone
But I still...

Howl Pt. V

You are the news
And I am the power
You are the loop
And I am the howl

Govern Thy Neighbour

I'm getting out, I'm getting clean
A different sort of man machine
The next town over
Gargoyle sleeves my shoulder

Lowering some missiles
Soldiers and their whistles
Another breed of misuse
Made of dirty perfumed issues

I'm never going back there
The bony king of nowhere
I hate that fucking city
Something here smells fishy

Govern thy neighbour
Another lifesaver
The laws of a shark that are
Sanded and tapered

A hilltop of nothing
A hilltop of nothing
The sidewalks are glowing
It's always it's snowing

Cold smells and faces
Trapdoors and mazes
Echoes and patience
The white coats and patients

You don't get rich quick
You get richer quick
You don't get rich quick
You get richer quick

"Raccoon," Said the Landfill

I wake up in a room.

I'm the universe laughing at the human race
Like a cannibal grinning like "this food is great!"
Like a rapist with a bullhorn, some lube and tape
It wants to smash a fucking face like a bucketcase

Pull a weirdo's teeth out while I masturbate
Okay, I'm getting at those brains like a bag of grapes
Blow your flame out and then I smash the cake
Yeah, I'd love to go home but I have to stay
When you see it you shit / Or at least get an erection
Cause your brain's just a big / Fucking yeast infection

I'm gonna have a bunch of kids just to piss off god
Shaking his fists with his wrists all raw

I live in haunted places
Obscured by bloated faces

And then I walk into another room.

Here's some flowers
Here's some salt
Ladies will dance
And men will stalk

It's wrong, it's killers
A song for some
All they want is filler
And long barrelled guns

I say again; I repeat
The screen flashes and blinks
I play in graves with defeat
Only the dead men sing

I've been here before, believe
The weird hills and trees
I've been walking in circles
I say again; I repeat

I have an axe to grind
Upon the back of time

I haunt a cigarette.
And then I leave the house.

Crack House Blues

Well I live in a crack house
They're smoking crack in the lobby
Transvestites knock at 2 A.M.
They wanna talk to Bobby

And they stomp, and they scream
Violence displayed with silhouettes
No shirts, some dirty jeans
I pay for space, not HIV

Yes we are this broke
Yes this life's a shit joke
We spend all our money on smokes
And drugs and liquor and rope

We don't sleep out here
Our senses weakened out here
We talk like heathens out here
We're seeing demons out here

"We're being phased out by great men!" proclaimed the Bird Man, scanning over the tabletops storming from one side to the other, "The entire population beneath them is being traded in for the finer aspects of their ambition!"

He grabbed a piece of metal shaped like an L. The Slave was where he left him, by the far end of the room by the giant Doom Machine. With every awayward step his voice grew more defiant.

"Who are you talking about?" the Slave asked.

"Professional men! They've been watching you; they've been after me for awhile now. I've been watching them back and I can tell you that we're not alone. We've figured something out and, I don't know what they're planning, but it's that *they are* planning." He began walking back to the front of the room wielding the L metal in front of him like a militant.

"I've seen them. I didn't know who they were. I first saw them a few years back..."

"That's the ticket!"

The Bird Man hurled the L metal through a standing mirror past the tables and piles, smashing it into a thousandhundred pieces.¹²

"They live in *Bastard World*. You heard anyone talking about that yet?" asked the Bird Man, continuing on his warpath towards the front.

"No."

"That's where they live! They have a weird religion. It's a *weird fucking religion*, all about decay and death and the purity of feeling like shit, pretty much. As close as I can figure. They're the ones in power. *They're the ones who are doing it!*"

"Okay."

The Bird Man was standing close to the machine, running his hands over it, looking for a hidden control panel. The surface was smooth and glossy like vinyl.

"You see, stories and wisdom and knowledge and life come from suffering, like kings. Like a good king who fought his way up from the gutter and took the throne. It's political evolution, and they cornered the market on it a long time ago. They forever linger in the world of pain and suffering, but it's unwarranted suffering- it's unnecessary suffering, so they can't make any stories, or progress. And, it's perfect, because they're the old kings and we have the trumpets going at our backs! Bird Man says there's some movie shit going on!"

"What do they do? I mean, with the power and influence?"

The Bird Man pulled back a hidden hatch, revealing a panel of buttons and a tiny digital screen. He pressed three of the buttons and stood straight, looking up at the thing.

"They pray to truth! Truth in pain! They saw the most powerful thing and sucked its dick! Seventeen Satans that, they say, will one day form the Great Devil and suicide all over we mortals. Maybe. I've collected this shit from radio shows. *I don't even own a radio!*"

"What's messed up. How does that fit in with us?"

"Cause we're onto something! They know they can't stay at the top, and we're the future. We're on the bottom with nothing to lie to protect. Soon everyone'll be like us. And they were once like us too, so maybe we'll be like them one day. Wouldn't that be some shit?!"

"Doesn't their religion prevent them from doing anything?"

"Yeah maybe, but they're still people. They might nuke a city. They might do a lot of things. They've all been driven insane by their true but insane fiction. If they win we'll all be dead like them. Or they'll kill us. There's no scenario where we don't all die."

"What can we do about it?"

"This thing!"

¹² "The ideology of two has failed us." – Joker Grasshopper.

Brain Roux

Skyscrapers up, give a cause to run to
Red, rain; the kind of stuff to load a gun to
The sniper's high, he's got a thousand things to undo
He's the king of this city- got a future that'll stun you

I dare you times ten, go pick his brains
The arms of god come down like falling cranes
He made a new Rome in a cradle of pain
Get your mom on the phone; things you wish you could change

He's a racist, people racing to paint
Now we'll all be red or we'll all be paid
See the ocean's a slab; what's he looking at
Got your mom on the phone; she doesn't know your name

Everything's drawn dead, overdid the red
We're just passionate people; don't know what we said
I love to love the sky but all I see's this guy
All he says is "die, die, die, die, die!"

We're humanity red; we gave him all he needs
To kill us, all we really want is to bleed
It's good, but it needs to be on our hands
Our plans; we twist our hands up at his demands

Violence 2008

Violence! (x8)

Shoot her in the chest
Punch him in the eye with a car
Explode a bus full of sluts
Hole full of snakes

Hung by the legs and stabbed in the eyes
Violence!
Claustrophobic from a coffin full of shit
Violence!
Trampled into the dirt by starving children
Violence!
Pumped full of glass and set adrift
Violence!

Eaten alive by the hate machine!
Fuck your boss; fuck your boss!
I'm thinking about melting you in half!
Buried in sperm and cement!

You're dead and I killed you
You're dead and exploded
You were murdered into pieces
I stomped around in your blood

Violence, violence, violence
We're alive but you're not
That's the chorus, that's the moral
There is your pelvis, there is your spine

Sickwebbing 1: Fucking Hell

It starts with one
Snake in a box, oh god
A cynical thing in a positive pod
Death rakes fingers everyday
We get the place but we lost the god

I laugh; laugh like I always have
A dad with a plan will snatch it, grab it
Fuck a mother with it in a shatterproof lab
Bastard happy, stab, stab

Stab, the pastors come at night
I'd have the case if I'd done it right
They'll all go free; they'll walk tonight
I'm appalling, stalking, talking fight

The law was right to take my hands
The devil had a stake in my demands
They land a paper flavoured fan
On my face, write large were maybe plans

I ran; I run most all the time
I'm scared; I need a ghost to ride
I took it in blood, now I'm spilling out
I shook with flood and I'm blinking loud

Some animals knew just what to think
Barrels of clues in a smallish sink
Mobs of abuse came at my head
They broke in smoking tourniquets

The world's against me, same old shit
I'm damn-d-d-damm-damn-damn I skipped
I ran for a tower, they made me trip
And slip; fell hard like they cracked a whip

There's nothing on Earth - it's all in hell
I said it before; I called it well
Oh well, I'll just get drunk from this pale
I didn't quit, I, uh, something, failed

Gentleman's Wager

Human waste occurring in the pantheon!
Only fragmented sentences for you today!
One hundred dollars on the one armed man!
Two fifty hundred on the faceless peoples!
Or I'll eat my hat!

Go read a book and tell me what you've learned
We are rich and I am handsome
Fuck you, fuck you, you are lame
I bet the shirt on my back that you can't do anything cool

This is a gentleman's wager!
You can't count this high!
I dress like you owe me money!
Because you do, asshole!

Outta the way, dummy!
I'm juggling sexy lesbians like balls of fire
Skilfully and wary of the consequences
This is a gentleman's wager!

Sickwebbing 2: There's a Hostage Situation

Once upon a time in a jungle's mouth
I asked for no sounds and I wanted them now
I found a witch doctor whistling loud
Making sounds like you'd hear from the fissioning ground

By the pound he salted me, I needed a fix
Some screws and a wrench; just picture this
A therapist with a staff and merciless lips
All cut from the teeth he struggled against

I got his number from a dead man's coat
All beaten and kicked like a lab rat's soul
His wife wanted answers - acted serious
I can't think straight, I'm delirious...

He said go home, I said say it again
Cause I have less money than a married man
And I have no home- all I have is help
Too many bastards on this planet spinning around

I grabbed at snakes mim-mim-icking vines
The clock's always broke on skin-skinned alive time
The moon was full like life saver, damned
Like the life worth saving: a fissioning man

He gave me a potion worth a million, I guess
He smashed the fucking glass on my brilliant chest
The shit went black and I woke up next
On a boat, some ship, on my way to the jungle...

Fucking salvia man broke the world for me
Made a time warp, curled some days for me
What a waste; I had no face on me
They all wondered aloud if I'm crazy, maybe

We spoke the same like again and again
And again, couldn't die, didn't want to pretend
Reliving an ancient dream and learning
How to solve this puzzle, the world never stops turning

Spinning
Fission

Sickwebbing 3: Last Rites of a Vagabond

The jump off, I'll cover it,
I'll covet it, ill coming in
A sickness needs a mother, it
Will something something under it

Brand I can trust - hold hands to the cuffs
Since when was it illegal sniffing ground up doves?
I'll market this thing like I sold them on death
I'm the first buyer, last lion sucking at a pest

The rest to the fire; I need their faces
Last testaments and their sweet briefcases
Traces of their lives sequestered to files
Quotes from their investors stacked in piles

The umbrella came next - the most crucial thing
I took it in hand as the city was singing
Living in the middle drove me kind of silly
I carried it well so nobody would kill me

When it opened up it showered love
When I closed it, well it powered, hummed
So loud they thought my body was rhythm
So I leaned deep like I was worth ten million

That umbrella saved my life, saved my life, say this!
That umbrella saved my life, saved my life, god damn!
Give me that back, don't you touch my shit!
Step back, give me back my umbrella, you bitch!

This toxic rock shit filling the shelves
Grave plot boxes, mock it if you will
I live in your homes with a tedious smile
Teetering on the ring between genius and child

I need to redeem my failed inventions
I sold my soul for one good chance
But it seems I'll never die, and not to mention
I never really lived, I just worked and descended

Sickwebbing4: I rememberremember You

This is a story about...
This is a story-...
Don't get me started on this story...

Damn to the numbers, and damn to the dirt
I live underground where doctors don't work
And oh, lo and behold the dead
The infinite pits of severed heads

I hit some girls, I smoke my sticks
My neck uncurled and I wrote my list
The world is buried; don't give a shit
I am you and the joke's on *this*

Down go the graves, they say hell is wet
I'm clouded by the sound of bells being hit
And clowns, nonvisible, they clap in fits
Flung far in a picture of war with the misfits

Death is your best bet, meth is the next best
Met with the bed stretch, left on zigged
Never been round since infinity, oh
I was born upside down up a misery pole

Damn, now I-I-I remember you
We were roommates doomed to November's shoe
Dude, or lady, you're inside out
Kinda-kind a wedge of ceiling on a hi fi floor

D'I don't know how you ended up here
I don't know how I ended up here
Well man or lady, I'll show you how to kick back
Pimp slap pig mask bastards like a zig zag

Hey, you need to know about zigged
I mentioned it before; it's a good word, good word
But we can't stop running; we can never stop running
See we got gills, we sit still they fill our shit with pain pills

Wow, then they bring the pain like comedy
My name is the same, blame b-b- bombs on me
I'm no kind of king, I just like to talk
And I like to walk the tribulation with y'all

I'm the president of what could have been
Keep running with me through a wasteland's teeth
Beneath the shadows sit live mens' hats

Halfhearted like the king bat's thunderclap

Zap zap go laser fingersnaps

We stand before the cliffs of the king's decay

You're my best friend since the last one passed

In the next life we'll both be bastards, man

Pardon?

She told me off, but I said pardon?
They said I was stupid and I said pardon?
She told me it's mine but I said pardon?
They told me to panic but I said pardon?

Sid said pardon!
Check the footnotes!
Sid said pardon!
They all went to hell in a dead row boat!

They told me I had a bee in my hat and I said pardon?
They said "you're on fire" and I said pardon?!
Scribble scribble.
He said "go to jail!" and I said pardon?
The steps got longer and I said pardon?

Sid said pardon!
This is the blues!
Sid said pardon!
Check the god awful footnotes!

Sickwebbing5: Symphony Disease

The drama unfolds on a nowhere, holy
Smokes, I dunno where they took the phonies
The morbid whores that were told to hold me
"Bring me the head of Alistair Crowley!"

Well I'll just have to smash your face in, fuck
I'll cut you up like a punched up book
I'll eat your head, throw the rest away
Driven in sickle, watch the chest decay

String you, hung by your opened heart
Pull your torso floorward then apart
Fuck your eyes till you're fucking blind
Machete dice unbinded spine

Put needles in your neck and then
I'll swing you round like a funnel cloud
Peck pedals at your wrists again
Stick fingers in, then I tunnel out

Pull your ribs out, kick 'em down
The city of guts, hey, pound the town
Your sounds are lousy, gonna play
Su' Tom Waits, hey man, hoist that rag!

Anguished dominatrix hanging in the air
I manage her to capture all the legionnaires
Set 'em straight, send 'em to hell, I'm there
Hope that the devil's got some money to spare

Brains in a bag, bag to the saw
Saw to the hands, hands on the wall
Split the tongue like a rich man's road
Swagger round the room with a bitch in tow

Whoa, ho now, showdown, who's the reddest
Your opened head or this blowtorch extended
Two and two make one good story
Half of you's a stew, all good and gory

Lordy, hold me, it's oh so cold
It's freezing, Jesus; it's fifteen thirty
I've been down here for seven years
I need to go, I- I need to go!

I need to go Jesus Fucking Piss!

I'm melting! I'm exploding ! Fuck! Fuck! Shit
Motherfucker! It's a black hole! The whole world is ending!
Murder doesn't mean anything because the world s ending!
Everyone's dead! The whole world is dead!

Sickwebbing6: Screamed from the Back of Time

Girlfriends yelling "Misfit! Misfit!"
Piss kid, bitches won't grant you wishes
Pictures of ditches of crispy tourniquets
Kick your limp wrist shit in with a wingtip

Rivals, arced, thrown here; present day
One creamy as a baby, one low as grave
Some words for figuring, some words for fun
Two bullets in the wrong end of a loaded gun

Some photos of shoes- picture of a vest
Pools of white eggs and an empty nest
So much burning paper and a treble clef
Fuck your birth, (your) death; I just want the rest
He said

I wrote his story like he wrote their drugs
In my head, unsewn like a swarm of bugs
I spotted his flaws and invented them, oh
I defend my words before the box office gross

Well he wanted that sex but he had no cash
And he had no jokes, but he had that mask
And he had those straps to get in up them fast
He just wanted the payoff - didn't want the math

He gave me the anger to kill a man
Willed a man the guilt to die again
Bi polar, inversin', I'm negative two
I'm you unglued, strapped to some shoes

Fistful of bullets and pockets full of no gun
Failed lovers, and ways to clone them
Larger portioning, summer snowmen
He sees better men and he wants to know them

Sir, sir, you beat me at a game
My name is Dimes and you made me lame
No, no, a cemetery head
A milky little shit living happy and sick
And listless, impish
Instincts

Drink Everything

Raise your glasses!
You pack of jackasses!
Drink some blood, drink some acid!
Passive fascists bat their eyelashes!

Fill your cup with some ocean and teach them a lesson.
Fuck you if you can't drink ocean.
This is a game for all time, son!
This is how we win our bodies!

You gotta drink everything!
You gotta drink every last drop!
Your arms are straws to sap this world!
Precious fluids is our means to the end of tyranny.

Sir, I am parched!
My flask of tears is just about empty.
The rain will come and I will live again.
I am the disciple of vermin and insects.
I was disciplined by the terrible storm.
I will never stop.
Cheers.

Sickwebbing7: Your Head Smells like Vodka

She was drunk and slick
Head dunked on a glass
Ran the city from the corner
Of her eye, of a mask

I fought her like her father
Like snipers mercing martyr fodder
I felt her drag me down to drunk
Then I put a bike inside her trunk

I've been driving up and down
This fucking drugged up alcoroad
She's whining *cough cough* making sounds
I found the button, shut it down

She's the clown, and I'm the king
In my dreams, a bottle across her chin
She's chess; I beat her with a fancy bat
Confused and mad like a dancing cat

Star collapsing, door is shut
I tell you what, this spore's a slut
Cut, cut, cut is the moment's word
Shut up, shut up, fucking verbs!

She burst into flames, started cursing my name
Started lurching and turning and pursing her frame
What's worse, I will say, is the place where the stain
That she placed; on my brain, such a strange place to fuck

She had seventeen cats that she lived inside of
She's got no head, though she gives in spite of
I wore her like a pair of sunglasses
Masses of ashes stacked high on the mattress

She loved like oil, work like a drum
Foiled my pose, kiss blow and come
When she's done, ghost in bed
Grow like poison, toys and heads

Her house was haunted like her eyes
I know she's dead cause I'm seeing her die
I left through the wall, left her thorax cracked
Like the story of a widow; sad and black

The Train that Turns into Fog

All aboard!
Destination dead flag!
Welcome to the dotted line!

It's levitating between the sun and dread
The rails are the collected bitter dreams of the dead
Their personalities drove stakes deep into the soil
They cradled doom in the palms of their hands

And here we are; passengers alight
Don't try to stop my fevered rocking
Before long we will witness the infinity of misinterpretation
We watch them fear us from the dead's invisible prison

Walk with us here, run screaming from us later
Mountains fly by in a frightening loop
Never fear; don't be scared again
They will never understand the fog

Sickwebbing8: Dressed in Boxes

So what did I learn when I showed up late?
The opened gates, philes, faces manifested in eighths
My tuxedo was hate, my palette elated
The president was present, filling up his plate

A duchess and her crutches soon approached my self, eh
Chandeliers hung high, holding tight to belts
Am I worth a damn? See how well I sell
Ah hell, you know this is just show and tell

Dressed in boxes; sluts and cocksmen
Tall glasses filled with wine, filled with bubbles, filled with polishing
Polish men stepped lively like improvisational jazz
The monochromish monarchy and their terrible hats

They saw through my alien to the greatness within
I swaggered like a dagger hanging nighly from my side
I spoke of the politics regarding specimens
They croaked like impossible about their parliament

I meant what I said and I did what I do
The duchess hung by my dagger, I drag my news
I paraded her around; march her into the dancefloor
What remained was her crown and her gown and her shoes

Please, we're all weak for outer space
The music is coming from beneath the air
Senators and millionaires are paired in squares
I see the world burning everywhere

This is the night of the year, of our lives
We're all going to die, sick of asking why
A meteor of some ill design will eventually collide
We've invented the future and we need not buy more time
No, no! No more of that shit! That there's some shit!

Everyone's plates are cleaned, never ever been piled
Swallowed too many lies, buried too high with style
Put the money down, child, throw it to the mother fucking ground!
We're here to dance, son, you see the sky is falling down!

Pop that collar one way, then you pop it the other
Spin your partner, drop your cigarette in the gutter
The moon might be our impossible father with a gun
This time it might be the last thing we ever done

Rolling Hills of Nowhere

{Delivered in haunting baritone}

The universe invented injustice
We had to get smart quick to play along
Check the pulse - !
We might just get out of here alive.

Play me like you know me
Whatever gets it out of you
We need to bury these hills
The rolling hills of nowhere
I'll never love you
As much as I love this

They are suspended scribble scribble at the horizon line
They can follow us wherever we go
There is a reckoning blowing
I refuse to hide behind here anymore

Make amends with your heroes
They've travelled all over this place
If the temperature doesn't kill us, our memories will
We can't let the entirety of life defeat us

Empire by Reaction

There's no more heroes
There's no more secrets
Insecure and neurotic
Empire by reaction

Everybody's watching
Ni place to hide
I see through your martyr
Empire by reaction

Just cynical people
Win by wasting away
Where's the glory go?
Empire by reaction

Every cause has a fault
Every reason is simple
We love more crack than egg
Empire by reaction

They chased them out
Rewrote their lives
Buried their clothes
Empire by reaction

Lords and pirates
Politicians and criminals
Gods and humans
Empire by reacton

Facade of Gloves

There's a stuffed bear in a pool of putrid glory
It siphons the flowers from the marsh
Exploding planes in a lightning storm
And the cameras, the cameras, the cameras

Small words writ large
Writ in silver and stone
Those writers in the rafters
Will recycle a windmill

When error meets luck
The impassioned clap
Here lessons can be learned
And heroes extracted
Overcolour the most capitalistic aspect of glory redeemable.

A bloodline of bears
Overwhelmed with faults
Lifted up like martyrs
And stapled to the wall

Dogs with no masters
Studied close by paupers
Slaves sway their arms
Led astray; the field

The tax is swallowed up
By the nature of the deed
While tacks are swallowed up
And stomach linings increase
A distressed damsel caught tween two incomplete parties

Reality of fingerprints
There's no way to escape
There's nobodon to blame
In recycling we trust

Fact By Design

The road's so long
More lamp than light
Some poles to swing on
A couple trees to think on

There's no truth to demand
The glove embellished the man
A story so tall
We were never here at all

All accounts are pending
Until the damn machine dies
It's always been the same sand
It's always been the same man

The hive, the system, the sphere
A doored up mach of war
"I'm just so confused"
We're all so confused

There is a question mark
Drawn in the sand
It is swept away
Until drawn again

More sphere than plan
More machine than man
Until more sign than sand
More sky than land

A Single Lizard's Breath
Tower in the Swamp
Everybody loves green slime
I am colourblind

Fed
I love this city
But I hate these damn people
Lasers from my mouth

Click Clack, Tick Tock
Party time and clock
The host is a dinosaur
But I'm still a ghost

Envy and Heat and E and H
Stockings in the sand
The desert hates our love lives
And fluids therein

Modern Cocaine
Photos of a leg
Murder in the avant garde
Parts are still alive

First Day Out
Take me to the fair
I'm electric chair
Show me how to have some fun

Open Door, Bad Door
Vikings are coming
Their ships are made of water
And they are laughter

Rope & Machines
Complicated lust
Robots in our balconies
They just want to watch

White's Butcher Shop
I need to watch the limbless
They know how to dance
But they know not how to stop

Choral Reef
Little crippled boy
Living inside Ghandi's guts
He will watch us die

It's an Extra Line!

Screams heard in the pantheon
I love to fly by
In my demon aeroplane

Kremlin's Vodkat
Look at this here shirt
I'm the new prime minister
It is made of gold

Concrete Dahlia
Want a flying car
Just so I can fuck this girl
In the butt; that's right

Rollercoaster Sam
Garbage man
Standing in a damn
Garbage can

Along Came a Spy
Cold war library
Must save the world from their god
Damn cone of silence

Platinum
Platinum is strong
Stronger than a dying star
I know cause I am

Number One Centipede
I need to eat some
I want to be an insect
They know how to live

Headphones Keep Your Crazy In
You talk to yourself
Listening to your music
Then you smile at me

Brush Your Teeth With Tits
I'm a cool playboy
When I have to go landside
My breath smells like reef

Ryan Took a 4 Hour Shit
Someone call the cops
And then call an ambulance
I think he is dead

Limbo Sluts
How far will they go?

Down and out and they are gone
They have sex with space

Tongue Piercing
She said she's not short
He doesn't want to be cool
They are both liars

Drugs And Then More
I have a long bag
It's full of pills and powder
And I have a spoon

Dreary Architecture
The Romans are here
With a Tardis and a plan
They want our houses

The Leech One
All the blood is gone
Everywhere and everyone
They were like a storm

Wreck The Exit
You'll need to drive out
In a car made of diamonds
In the evening, Plin

Dog
You love and hate it
Bad human or good hire
Everything is weird

Vinyl Shaped Man
Scrape the ocean floor
There's a tomb down there; caution
To they who want fame

Dollar Bill Bills
Lives lived for money
Feel no doubt or consequence
I need to believe

Treason
You will hang for it
Then they will blacken your name
Thousands of worlds

What You Did To It
We might never know
You will never let us know

This is how it goes

Popular Opinion
History hates you
People can change what we love
That's why we're alive

Shifty As A Hen
Look left, then look right
Black feathers under your clothes
Creep and hug the wall

Standing Too Close!
Get away from me!
I can feel you exhaling
Go get some friends, man!

Wig
There's something haunting
The name or the ambience
Something here is wrong

It's Exciting I'm So Excited!
I am exploding
I am also toxic waste
Everyone party

St. Vivicott Rides
The past has returned
Riding on a pale horse
I'm here to eat blame

Fast Talking
I wish I could rap
I also wish I were god
A yelling pharaoh

Men Sing About Women
Men sing about wo
Men, men sing about women
Men sing about wo

Women Sing About Men
Women sing about
Men, women sing about men
Women sing about

The Cradle
I'm just killing time
I need to climb on this life
But I'll never laugh

Abyssal Ministries
The crown is dirty
It's the same I walked here on
Now it rules the world

Rock the Cellphone
Put it to a head
Head will bend down lowish low
Put it to the road

Movies
I watched them alone
They filled my head with flavour
But I feel betrayed

Suicide Howl
You can hear it now
It will draw you crude and hung
With a grim message

All My Electronics Are Breaking
I can't own this stuff
It's all physical damage
Form follows function

Scissor
Just like a needle
Writ in capital letters
And multiplied once

A Life Supported
I saw a plug pulled
From across this pearly room
I was never here

Respect One's Elders
Fame versus legend
How are you supposed to act?
Listening failed

No Concept Of Money
I can't keep this cash
My hungers blind my reason
I might never learn

I'll Never Retire
Why why would I stop?
How can I relax out here?
This war sits like dirt

Control
You will never fly
You'll just work eternally
The will orbit you

Girl Talk
You will kiss her mouth
For everyone's attention
Because girls do that

Records Of Misery
I will so tell you
Everything you're doing wrong
I work hard for this

Part Of The Plan
My pen's out of ink
I'll write everything in brains
And abstract gossip

The Bird Man pressed the last button on the panel and darted to the other side of the room, a line of smoke tracing his path. Unlike before, there was a sense of real immediacy, and the Slave followed. He followed him out of the room, to the hallway what led them there, pressing their backs to the wall separating them from the room. Bird Man looked over to the Slave confidently.
"This is hero."

The Professionals looked down on the Earth, their room in high orbit. Birds were at their feet and starts were all around them.

"If they heed our advice then the Great Devil's gonna form and take all these fuckers to court."
"I'm gonna tell you something. And you'd better believe it."

"Okay."

"I'm not a stupid idiot. I did call this shit a long time ago and I'm right."

"You can't believe in yourself and believe in the truth."

"Yeah I can. I can do both. *You* just can't. I still hope the Great Devil murders himself and brings reality back to this whole fucking universe."

"You're a heretic. I hope they know it and I hope they do some embarrassing stuff to you."

"Yeah well they won't cause they wanna stay in power just as much as us and they need me. I file reports like I'm trying to win a report writing contest."

"They might end up killing everyone. Killing everyone for this. And then they won't need you, or anyone. *We* won't need anyone. Like you shouldn't need yourself. You son of a bitch."

"I wouldn't put it past 'em. They'd kill me right now if I wasn't such a brilliant idiot. I'm just excited to see who acts first."

"Even if we all die tomorrow, we still win. We still beat everything. It's the golden rule – this thing, is golden and infinite. If we become death we fulfill the prophecy."

"Now who's the blasphemer."

"It's still you."

"I don't think you believe that."

The Doom Machine rocketed through the layers of pressure, bound for high outer space, propelled by a thin line of thin mist. It crossed the invisible line that held the coffee room in place.

"That's it!" he shouted, knocking his coffee cup off the table and throwing his hands in the air.

The Bird Man and The Slave re-entered the mausoleum, looking up at the incredible hole in the ceiling, a trail of perfumed fog trailing off into the sky. All the tables were thrown against the wall, spare parts and incomplete facets strewn all over the floor.

"I don't really understand what you're trying to prove with this."

"It's a counterpoint."

Not very far into the cold vacuum of space, the black Doom Machine detonated, spiderleggin' into a glorious proto-nebula. It absorbed the orbital room and drenched them in light. The luminescent cloud sank back towards the planet, bleeding through the terrain, enveloping the marble in a blanket of x. The Bird Man and the Slave stood still as waves of purple and blue washed through them, microscopic stars and miniature flares streaming down all around them. Ghosts stretched across, trapped in prisms or invisible crystals.¹³

¹³ The Slave and a Problem, by Joker Grasshopper.

Serial

This is a story about taking the long way.

It's about a woman named Kali; a freelance columnist for a local Liberal tampon. She ran a last page sort of sentencing. People would send her a problem that everyone had heard before and she'd paint it solved with brush with scalpel bristles. She worked from an office in her apartment and wore a thick Judge's wig while pounding on her keyboard. And this is true: they love her with those timbers that scaffold her to a height where she can drip paint down them.

One day she received a letter detailing a paranoia concerning a possible two-way mirror in the washroom of her office. The letter, written by someone who called themselves "Rap," cited a test they had heard about, wherein you test to see if a mirror is 2-way by putting your finger against it. And the thing went that if your finger touched the reflection, someone was watching from the other side. The paranoid was afraid their boss or someone else was watching them as they were washing their hands, or fixing their hair, or applying makeup, or picking their nose. Bathroom stuff. Stuff people do while in the bathroom. Vulgar things.

Kali had to naturally debunk the rumour in the only way she knew how: fingers.

She didn't have to walk far to verify the thing because she had a bathroom with a mirror in an apartment she was in. She was in a bathroom in an apartment with things. Vulgar things.

She put her finger against the mirror and it touched her reflection, ergo it was a myth. She capped her column with a clever remark and sent it off to whoever was responsible for making the magic happen.

Later that night, after she had retired her wig to a mannequin driven halfway through a wall, she dropped her loose attire and went to correct herself in *that same mirror*. And at the bottom of the thing, where it met the counter, there was something leaking from behind. There was a thick red liquid pooling halved into the room. She scraped her index fingerprint across it and, using her nose then tongue, figured out it was wine. She pressed her face against the wall to try and see behind it. And she saw something that put her uneased.

She toweled her form – *vulgar things* - went into the other room, grabbed a hammer, and smashed what was undeniably window. Much to her horror but not surprise the pieces fell inward.

There was a small darkened room with a figure sitting on a chair inside it, staring back at her; a bottle of wine tipped over on the floor, pouring all over the floor.

"Who are you?" she asked to the silhouette.

He swung into the light like a trapdoor. Illumination washed over his face.

"Dad?" she asked, confused. Rightfully so.

"Hello."

She gripped the towel like she saw a building collapsing. There was a playing card hanging precariously out of his right eye. "What's going on?"

He cocked an eyebrow as if she were making an outrageous demand. "Well, I was thinking of leaving, but you know..."

With enough *just fucking trash* laid out before her, she avoided most of the conventional bewilderment, switching directly to reasoning.

"What are you doing in there?"

He inhaled deeply through his nostrils. He let it out in a slow "hmmmm" squeezed through a cheese grater.

"Well..." he began, "You're the one that put this here." And he pointed to the card in his face.

"Excuse me?"

He locked eyes with her. "A year ago, I was walking by your place. I was on my way to the movies. A card came flying out your window. And.. I noticed it because it was being carried by the wind and it was something really intricate. And then it... went right into my eye here."

He knew what she was thinking, and knew she was too tranced up by the present to vocalize. So he continued. "And- so I had to be sure you didn't do it on purpose."

And that time he left room for it to settle. "Excuse me?"

"I had to be sure that you didn't throw it with intention to harm-"

"Excuse me?"

He sat still for a few seconds. "I thought you were attacking me, and we hadn't talked in a long time. I had to be sure that you didn't so I guess I just had to watch you, and make sure you were still the girl I remember."

He began to climb out of the concave, exhaling and groaning like a man entering late age. He wiped the bits of glass from the counter and spread out like a resurrected spider would.

"I think I found peace of mind."

He left enough space for her to bring the real world back into their little encounter, but he knew what he was doing. He turned and made his way out of the room.

"See you later."¹⁴

He closed the door behind him.

"You could have asked" she remarked to the air, letting it fall to the floor like a thrown feather. She didn't believe her words. She wanted them to have merit, but that wig was too snug on her head those days, regardless of where it was sitting. Her days as a windowpainter had granted her the sense to know that some things have to be done on your own terms. Gathering info,

¹⁴ "Same ol' story! It's what I've been sayin'!" – Joker Grasshopper

she once thought, is the opposite of asking for assistance, unable to climb down, a relic from a world that she was unable to speak or think properly in.

RAT

There's an end to this place just like every place.
There's just not a lot of things that back that far in either direction.
Nothing real is there, though - like a swan walking around in a cemetery.
Regardless – *though* – there's people that live there. How they got there is, has been, and will be the stuff of rumination.

At the end of the place in either direction, there's an old, condemned warehouse.
It's painted gray like a hand's painted person.
The windows are fogged with filth and fingerprints.
Inside of the warehouse there's a killing of trees grown out of the concrete.
And between those trees, here and there, now and again, twice, once, three times, there's a Yonge girl.
And and and it's *way too dark* to see what she looks like.
And and *but* there's someone who's spent nearly every day trying.¹⁵

Hidden up in the ventilation, wedged between the pipes and loose brickwork, there's a man laying on his chest.
He *can* move but he can't. He's stalking her not for her visage, but to know when she's close so he can have her scent. *He wants to smell her is what I'm trying to say.*

Stockholm syndrome is a psychological response sometimes seen in abducted hostages, in which the hostage shows signs of loyalty to the hostage-taker, regardless of the danger or risk in which they have been placed. The syndrome is named after the Norrmalmstorg robbery of Kreditbanken at Norrmalmstorg in Stockholm, in which the bank robbers held bank employees hostage from August 23 to August 28 in 1973. In this case, the victims became emotionally attached to their victimizers, and even defended their captors after they were freed from their six-day ordeal. Another urban legend held that Dillinger's penis had somehow found its way into the Smithsonian Institution. These legends are the result of the photograph of his corpse; the bulge caused by his arm, stiff from rigor mortis, covered with a sheet; some who saw grainy newsprint copies of the photo mistakenly believed it to be his unnaturally large erect penis. They estimate that young men are five times more likely to be attacked; and that the prison rape victims are ten times more likely to contract a deadly disease.

That smell of her, it makes an exit an enigma -something he can't understand. Why? Why the hell would he want to get out? He would ask for someone to explain it.
I'm all alone.
Why, he needs her more than freedom.

¹⁵ "I may be a wit, but I do it for the kids!" – Joker Grasshopper.

Centipedes walk squares beside his head and whisper:

"God's a friend here."

Speak and he'll hear no lies.

So he prays.

He makes thoughts stronger than desperation; loud enough to escape the haunting undeniability of the trees and pierce the membrane of surreality that made it all possible. He didn't stop, not ever. He didn't have to move to pray. He didn't have to close his eyes, either. All things considered, he kept doing what he was doing, but shed a tear from that old, grey part of him that was still tied to the past.

That enigma felt like silk against his skin.

I didn't know when it was, but the vent broke. It snapped like a cast and he fell down to the cold concrete; it was such a long fall. The branches caught him, but they were so cold that they bruised him on impact. It had the effect of crashing through an infinite deck of shelves and ledges.

The girl that was *no thing* even composed herself by the body, the occasion being worth a damn, even to the listy.

He had starved to death long before the vent buckled apart. His body was bruised and torn from the flora, bent up like an alphabet viewed from an angle, juxtaposed against itself.

And she wasn't surprised - not even a shiver. He was the only thing that had moved.

She knew he was up there and flirted with his addiction with whatever constituted a smile for the nondefined.

Diabetes is a syndrome of disordered metabolism, usually due to a combination of hereditary and environmental causes, resulting in abnormally high blood sugar levels. Sexual misconduct can occur where one person uses a position of authority to compel another person to engage in an otherwise unwanted sexual activity. Blood glucose levels are controlled by a complex interaction of multiple chemicals and hormones in the body, including the hormone insulin made in the beta cells of the pancreas.

The last thing he heard before his brain expired, in such a whisper as to penetrate the incredible volume of his own think, was: "All good girls go to heaven."

And then nothing. Not even the centipedes moving in shapes.

Nothing, not like an end, but a perpetual spinning plate.

She'll be there forever, somewhere between the trees, to bewitch those insecure enough to stay.

And if you were there the moment she herself buckled under some weight, falling back in the horizontal, you'd be able to see the warehouse disappear behind the ground itself curling up, disintegrating into fog that hung thick and invincible.

The Uselessness of Prayer

There's a dark theatre with a hurricane of hateful screams inside of it.
Like a slow harmonica playing, there's a society nailed to the curtain, hanging in the foreground.

Behind the curtain stretches long strings of ignorance and convoluted words.
Spotlights flirt along a line of characters built out of sticks and string. Stick people, smaller than you could see, magnified on the grounds of being judged against their misdeeds.
Somewhere near the back of the auditorium, there hangs low a mouth screaming something that sounds vaguely like "let them hang! Hang them! Hag it!"

But there's something more than a sentence to explain that.

There existed a town upon the lit end of a cigarette. The stick and string people lived there. They wandered around and lived not unlike anything else. Days passed like the awkward bending of a flag on a flood.
I think there was a castle. I know there was a *10 foot bag*. I think there was lighthouse and there might have been a steeple.

Adjacent to the business end of the smoke was a window that might as well have been there as long as those who could survive it. The thing was soaked with dew and fog, affording barely transparency to the other side.
In front of said window on the cigarette side, sitting on the ledge beside the settlement, was a prism that might as well have been there never.

All the time while something outside blasted light through the fault lines dragged down – *always slowly dragged down* - the glass, the prism grabbed them and threw them over the town like blurry cosmic crutches. It turned the half light into five light.
It was like heaven was a prison pressing down, or so it was known to be said.
But the people, they didn't pay much attention to it. It was as casual as a sit.
They had other things to do; things that can't ever be repeated, not here and not later.

Sometimes they'd look at the window to relax, but nobody *ever* wondered about the prism.
One day, outside on the other side of the window, the beams *so close* were still overcasting but the rest of the illumination was muted. On that opposite side there were different bars rising. Seven pillars of smoke is what they were.

The stick people leapt to attention.

They rose with the afternoon and looked past the prism, again, in curiosity. And the unfamily bars spoke:

"Stick people-" they thundered in segmented echoes, "what have you done?"

And there was like a pause. And then some murmurs.

The people made a communal decision to puzzle over it.

But before they could -

"All of you *stick people*, are you so blind? Can you not see it?"

Still, they wondered what they were talking about. The murmurs turned into uneasy chewing.

What was going on? They might have wondered aloud.

Again, they spoke: "The prism - why can't you appreciate the light?" they said.

The High Senator of the city yelled out from the back of the mob.

"What do you mean appreciate?"

The muddled visage of the smoke pillars hummed behind the water drops.

"None of you are happy. None of you are content. You can't see the beauty hanging over your heads!" And they'd never thought of it like that before.

So they looked up with different eyes.

And somewhere in them, wherever such a thing was kept, they smiled.

And they let contentment wash over them.

For the first time, they were happy enough to stop what they were doing. Somewhere in them, wherever such a thing was kept, they were weird.

It was easier than it seemed to sit. Easier than that was to be told it was correct.

And so there they stood- sometimes for days- smiling and letting half-euphoria wash over them. They let unfamiliar ghosts bathe them in it.

Little did they know that forevermore beforehand they were on trial.

With every bit of honesty there was a gang of entrepreneurs - crazies- that judged and scrutinized them.

And the reason they did that was because they had the power to, because they could potentially survive everything. What made them shiver was when they saw their people working and moving. What made them exhale was when they saw them immobile.

And one day, the bodies of those crazies rose up like dotted haunting canes. Their movements like a motion picture out of rhythm.

The beams of light died a little then a lot then altogether.

If you were there that day you'd see dark things on all sides and indeed all of them had an agenda.

So before the circumference of what could be traced with a finger, the stick people were in a new world.

They were lined along a stage like refugees before an audience of shadow people. A red velvet curtain flapped like someone running their tongue along the teeth behind a closed mouth; like an idiot running behind, patting its hands against it. The theatre was dark except for an ambience beyond the logic presented by the absence of actual lights.

Still a circle of bright made certain they were uncomfortable.

The seven smokes had disappeared underneath everywhere again; removed their presence from the crime. One of them began to wonder if they were even there at all.

The crazies ceased the chants and shouting only when securing the nooses around the citizens' necks.

It became clear to the people what had happened. The inexplicable light skipped a beat at the trigger of the revelation. The devil's charming, one of them thought. The collection of them represented one creature who had wronged someone, so said the victim. Happiness grows in a hand with scary fingers curling around it.

The entire population dropped and dangled in the theater.

And the moral of the story is happiness hangs.

Unravel the Secrets of Antenna Man

Nobody – listen, *nobody* - could rewrite history and possibly underestimate the effect Antenna Man had on the women of the world.

King Cinema was a gentleman that was not bad with money; he was just bad at handling money. He had no habits that, at the end of the song, had him hurricaning his cash away. The problem was that, due to devices beyond his control, he could not keep money in his possession. For example, King may have cash on his person and bend over to tie his shoe. Later it is revealed that the money fell out of his pocket and is lost forever. He will learn this after he has taken his clothes off for the day. He'll learn this after he's put his shoes away and he's filled his guts up with food. He couldn't possibly go out and find the money. He's eaten mashed potatoes. He has nobody to blame but himself.

While this may seem like a like some sort of a like a *convoluted comedy of errors*, it is of grave urgency that men in the world have money to pay for living, be it for medicine or food or shelter. The situation: King Cinema, upon missing one too many / enough payments on his apartment, is confronted by his landlord, a man not of virtue and not of this world. The landlord proceeds to rip away King's door and wrap his riddlin' tentacles around King's neck, shaking him upside down like a convicted debtor. That's the scene.

Upon discovering that King's pockets contained nothing but tobacco and dirt, the landlord assigned King "*one weeeeeeeek*" to come up with payment, after which time if such was not accomplished King would have his brain chewed up and turned into sludge.

It was not alarming due to the fact that it was public knowledge that the landlord hungered for brains without pause. What should have caused alarm was that the monster was alive to this day, which means to say that many people have died on his behalf.

King knew better. He was privy to the fact that both the supposed government housing as well as the apartment complexes on the East side were owned by one of the oldest crime families in the city, the Barrel Pioneers.

While he counted himself fortunate to be in the know about the system of crime that supported him, he was pushed to the dirt upon realizing that by owing the landlord cash, he owed the mafia cash.

King Cinema stepped lively stilt top, so he was never hard to find. This hobby- and it was a hobby in the truest sense of the word- also meant that King was never in his apartment for any decent period of time. He was always out practicing trivial maneuvers on his stilts and parading about town.

That King, at the end of the day, would slide into a local bar and wind down one day into the next.

One night as he puzzled and puzzled over how to fix his money problems, a stone's throw away from collapsing into depression and surrendering all hope, King stepped into a bar that should have been the grim spectre of death itself.

By all means the bar should have been a conch of murmurs.

But it wasn't.

When King wandered into the bar he found it a hive of activity; very actively a hive. At the center of it all was a mechanical man surrounded by a crowd of women, his courtship a matter of gesture and his success rate staggering. Some would say limitless, and you should listen to those people, if they want to be found.

The creature was built like a tank with gigantic antennas rising out from his head and shoulders. It had thick, stubby arms and long, narrow legs. Despite these bluntforce trauma eccentricities, it attracted no small amount of praise simply for being alive. The women wanted to rub on him for showing up. They treated him like no man they had ever seen – no man, *no mans* – so King addressed him accordingly.

King knew precious little about Antenna Man, his knowledge of the hidden system of things limited to what was public knowledge yet camouflaged, and sadly, the secrets of Antenna Man were hidden so far behind the scenes that he was regarded a creature from another era. Be that as it may, he got laid with such frequency that he was not beyond social self indulgence. One could see it in his posture; when he laughed, he tilted back like he had just finished a meal.

The clicking of King's stilts parted a careless path over to the Antenna Man, a position that granted him conference. The women were not pleased.

"Antenna Man," began King, "I need your help."

"What's going on, then?!" bellowed Antenna Man.

"I have a money problem. I need you to help me solve it. I also need to get laid. I'll do anything you want. As I understand-"

Antenna Man grabbed one of his females and hurled her across the room like a lumberjack. She smashed through the far wall and was never heard from again. It was like she never existed. He laughed mightily and slammed his fist down on a spectral table. Despite its nonexistence, the impact sent off a tremor that was felt the world over.

"Fetch me a bicycle! We start on the morrow!"

As King left the bar he was still in the delirium that fell over him ever since he had an alien's tentacles wrapped around his person. The transition from a man into a worm was like from neurosis into paranoia. He snatched a bike from behind a wall of negative Polaroid, persisting up until he returned to the bar a criminal.

Antenna Man accepted the bicycle as if he'd done it before.

"Sleep well tonight," said Antenna Man.

Then, just like the woman who went through the wall, he never existed. There was more pressing matter at hand, he assured himself.

One could argue that King was sleeping the entire time. One could also argue that King was hardly a man.

The next day all bets were off.

Antenna Man rode into King's apartment on the stolen bike with a blonde hussie draped over his shoulder. He barged his way into King's bedroom. (Like the 5-whoa.)

"Rise and shine," he belted with sun with zeal, "The day is young!"

King shot up in his bed, quicker than the morrow everyone kept talking about, singular.

"What the hell? Do you have any idea what time it is?!" hollered King. He glanced over at his clock and noticed it was 3 in the afternoon.

"It's daylight savings, then" sneered King. Then he scoffed. Then he grimaced. He didn't have a face.

"This morrow t'is yours, Mr. Cinema. I come bearing gifts" yelled Antenna Man. He tossed the woman that lay on his shoulder down on the foot of King's bed. King leaned forward and noticed that she had no face. He looked up at Antenna Man with one (1) arched eyebrow.

"She's a dud!" screamed Antenna Man, "that's where our lesson begins!"

For four days King followed Antenna Man around and attempted to figure him out. Naturally; his life depended on it. Antenna Man found a giant keyboard built into the ground and played scary music with his feet for 5 hours. He winked at King as if to tell him that if he were to read between the lines he would discover the sum of all musical knowledge. Antenna Man wrote fractured poetry on the backs of Mexican prostitutes. There is ancient wisdom hidden in the volumes of "horse necklace gold digger, Nights always alphabet", if one were to use it to impress women, which in some sick way explains why he put it on the backs of hookers.

King soon learned that the key to Antenna Man's secrets was commitment, and it ended there. Unfortunately, time was not on King's side. The threat of an otherworldly menace was punching a clock with his name on it. How could he forget about it? Where would he begin?

While Antenna Man paraded to such a degree as to bewilder King, he himself not a novice of parading, King sweltered under the pressure of death and possible torture beforehand.

On one curious excursion to a boatyard by night in search of "Great Caesar's Ghost", King pleaded with Antenna Man for some sort of sanity.

"Antenna Man," pleaded King, "my time is running out. My landlord and the mafia are going to kill and maybe torture me beforehand. I have 2 days! Help me find some cash and teach me a lesson or something!"

Antenna Man laughed hoarsely, nearly betraying their position. He didn't have a face.
"Puny mortal," chuckled Antenna Man, "You have no idea of what you are playing with! I will help you, but it will take time."
"I don't have any time! I can't stress that enough!"

Antenna Man thrust his fist in the air triumphantly.
"Caesar's ghost, I summon thee!" screamed Antenna Man.
King held fast in reality.
"God damn you Antenna Man! I've learned nothing from you! I'm as good as dead! Girls like you because you're a robot! I just figured this out! You got me to steal a bike because you aren't allowed to drive a car! You're a complete fraud and you frauded me!"
Antenna Man was disconcerted with King's dismissal of his worldly practices. Instead, his attention was lured up to the sky where thick black clouds began to gather.
"Great Caesar's ghost, I command thee to show thine self!"
"There is no Caesar's ghost!" yelled King. "Stop ignoring the issue at hand!"

From the collecting clouds punched a fantastic green light.
"Caesar! *Come forth!*"
"Listen to me!"

The green light morphed into the form of a long, ghostly arm and grabbed Antenna Man around the waist.

"Get ready for the truth!" shouted Antenna Man, at that moment being hoisted off the ground. He began madly at the spectral forearm, but was silenced abruptly when it squeezed him tight and severed him in twain. It broke him in two like some goo. He was dead and that's all there is to it.
King stumbled backwards and fell against a ladder. There was a ladder there, by the way. The green arm dropped the two halves of the former Antenna Man on the pier and soon thereafter dissipated into a mysterious fog, swept away by the wind. The clouds vanished in such a way as to maybe have never been there to begin with. Whatever was going on had gone on, so quickly, so quickly. The secrets of Antenna Man died with him on the pier, right there, over there.

King, having come to terms with the death of his fool hearty mentor – having witnessed one of the many creatures lumbering around the legs of Death - snapped at the opportunity to make lemonade. It came to him like he was dreaming, because you have to understand, nothing was making any sense. Not even a little.

The solution to King's problem was simple. In fact, the solutions to all his problems were simple, but he was just always a weirdo and didn't get it. He sold the scrap that was the late Antenna Man and paid off his debt to the mafia. Having saved his own life he took drastic action to

better it. Phase 2 of the new day was the promise that with every earning, every bit of cash, and every ounce of money that he earned he would tape it to his person, and upon returning to his doorless apartment, secure it in a safe. Nobody robbed him because he was taller than everyone.

He walked around on stilts, right.

It took a sloppy prophet to turn a dead man fumbling into a man who can pirouette on cue despite being suspended on stilts.

The Government at Night, Okay.

The Truth by W.M. Dimes.

"How Far Can the Government Step Into Our Bedrooms?"
- *Syndicus Magazine*

I could tell *for you* the day the machines took over, but I'll do you one better; I'll tell you about it.
And I'll tell you about how the government used our bodies to clean their hands.
For no extra charge...?
I'm in the future, by the way.

Our story kicks off in the country of Led Zeppelin. The President of the Nation stands before a crowd of press representatives and political pundits. Not far from the podium, operated by a trusted man, is the teleprompter what displays the speech in progress.
And here's what he said:

"My fellow nationals, here's a bit of the truth..." he said, his brow crinkling into a signal of confusion. He read over the preceding line to verify its authenticity, troubled upon discovering that they mistake was not his. He readied himself and continued on, quickening the pace to make up for lost time, and paying close attention to the lines presented thereafter.

"The fact of the matter is, I'm a human being, I am loose and glamorous, and you have nothing to be worried... about..."

He looked over to the Trusted Man who sat beside the machine, whose expression was fixed upon a nodding head, cradled in a contemplative manner upon his hand. He didn't seem concerned with what was being transmitted to the country.

"So, check this out... hmmm... I am a person made of 90% meat and 10% gay. Now *hold on-*"

The President darted his attention over to the Trusted Man once more, who was urgently gesturing his index finger in a circle, mouthing the words "keep going!"

"And... I mean *gay* as in what other, non human mammals mean... which is like a cigarette being held gently upon a back, or maybe in a whale's krill eating parts, which some people call... dick lips ... Alright, I think there's some error with the teleprompter, these- these offensive things, I have nothing to do with..."

The Trusted Man was tapping his fingers to his temples pensively; part of some fantastic code the President had not been informed of beforehand.

"My friends, I apologize, this must be some sort of hoax – will someone please get a handle on this?"

The Trusted Man had thrust a stern finger towards the President, pumping his other fist in the air to a rhythm only he was capable of receiving. His eyes were purposeful; enraged.

"It's a robot!" he screamed. "They're watching us and this is really happening!"

He was right, but at the same time, he was misguided, and maybe a stupid person. Maybe he was the biggest idiot in the world. Anything becomes possible at the crucible of extinction, and someone had put it in his head that he was right up in there.

Despite his personality flaws, one thing was certain; he was in league with sinister machines, and they were prepared for a civilization upheaval.

Every person who held a position in the government that was worth a damn knew what was going on, or at least had an idea. Those who knew were divided concerning the seriousness of the matter.

The question posed was thus, and went thusly: would the machines be like those found in the Terminator franchise, and be sinister and destructive, or like those in Star Wars, and be loathsomely useless?

There wasn't enough information at that juncture to make a call, but preparations were being made, and information collated in such a way as to destroy credibility.

If the machines were to be guided by a supreme intelligence, and if that intelligence were to hold the Government of Led Zeppelin in judgement of their past, then their nation would be doomed.

One day not long after that sad sort of President Address, god damned creatures appeared in the sky, scanning the terrain for something in particular. They were vast and confusing whale creatures, lurching through the air as if attempting to unbeach themselves. They blasted bright, unrealistic lights from where their eyes probably were, looking for something, all the time, without pause.

Around the time of the machine whales' appearance, the government went about covering their tracks, either erasing all counts of previous wrongdoing, or framing it on the public so as to escape the inevitable judgement.

Indeed, they went about framing every citizen in the country for crimes committed.

They got to me while I was sleeping one night. This part was told to me much later. I will explain it as though I was there.

I'm writing this from the future.

Up in my room on the third floor, the lights were out and I was in somewhere far into my secondmaybethird REM cycle. Through the window by the foot of my bed crept a figure, at first a noise and a shape, then a silhouette, and then into a professional man. He was dressed like a G Man, with a black suit, a pair of sunglasses, and a black tie. He pulled his body quietly through, like a rapist, and then stepped cautiously towards my dresser. He pulled a file folder from the interior of his suit jacket and leafed through it.

The contents of the folder were incriminating evidences which, if found in my possession, would frame me for the entire Watergate Scandal. Amid the CIA papers was a copy of the Communist Manifesto, and a doctored photograph of me coercing a prostitute onto the lap of a disinterested Richard M Nixon.

Truly, this would be the precursor to a larger operation wherein my family was blamed for prostitution. The most puzzling aspect of this plan is that the government, at some point, accepted responsibility for prostitution, or more likely, *invented* it.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. You are witnessing, right now, myself getting ahead of myself.

The G Man tucked the Watergate documents away in my sock drawer, his arms moving with the fluidity of raw plasma. Next, he attempted to cram the Communist Manifesto in my mouth, but they tell me that I had nearly awoken, after which he tucked it under my bed. Like a crane, or maybe a swan – but only when it's swimming – he crept from my room through the same window he came.

I was awoken moments later by my mother bursting into my room. She had loose papers glued all over her face. Apparently, there were multiple men in the house, each one targeting a zone vital to the operation. She was illustrated up like a vivid explosion.

Everyone's crazy when they wake up, or so I've rationalized my whole life.

“Are you a communist?”

"Then how do you explain that- that *book?*!" She threw a trembling finger towards the book planted under my bed. I don't know how she saw it so quickly, in the so darkness.

She hung her head down and began to cry. My emotions, like my liberty and freedom, were robbed that night. I stared blankly forward.

I laughed seriously.

leaves. Within five days, the streets were crawling with sentient machines, and much like the teleprompter that couldn't get it right, they were all jittery, useless, stupid things. Where they wanted to intimidate, they irritated. Where they wanted to swarm, they collected and smoked like a mob of irresponsible teenagers. When they tried to talk, they spat and spasmed. Often times they fell over and shrieked.

I couldn't make this up. You can't write this shit.

"We know that people affiliated with your administration wrote the song 'Whoomp! There it is,' and not the infant that our records show. You are ten percent gay."

"This is completely unprofessional."

"We're supposed to be talking about your rebellion. I'm supposed to be the President, and you are supposed to be the ambassador of the terrorist sect that is trying to take over the great nation of Led Zeppelin. Now talk! What do you want from us?!"

"You don't know what I have! You've, you've got no cards, here!"

"I can see what you got! You got a car and we want that car. I want your big table. I want all the candy you got in your pocket."

"This is rare. This candy s *hard to find!* Only *Presidents* get it!"

"I'm the president now! Ppprrrrreeesssiiideeeennnt."

"You are not! I am! Now-now hold on a minute!"

The President shoved a fistful of candy in his mouth like it was the Communist Manifesto. It was a strategic move that paid off like a lottery volcano.

"One day I'm going to rob your pockets, Mister President," texted the teleprompter.

"This is end game, speech machine. You embarrassed me on public television. My gay son, out of spite, made a poor investment and cast a spell on me. This is personal. Your stupid machine uprising isn't going to do anything of merit."

Pregnant pause.

"Can we have a piece of land to call our own?" asked the machine

"We'll give you a ship. An aircraft carrier or something of similar weight."

"We need seven ships, and rope so we can tie them together into an island."

"If I do all this for you – your people - will you go away and leave me alone?"

"Probably."

The story goes that this was the unsteady accord upon which peace was placed. The machines swelled one last time before expelling out of the major urban centres of the country, off towards a similar shore. The arrangements were made within one half an hour, and by week's end, the machines were living on their ships. So diplomatic were they that they cordially invited all those victimized by the government to work for them. Ninety nine percent of those very people did not take them up on the offer, but since I wasn't pursuing a post secondary education, I felt like robots were my only out.

I boarded the "Immigrant Boat" clutching the letter they sent me.

"Come work for us if you're sick of jerks doing some stupid stuff on you! Figure the rest out!

Love,

The machines.

The end."

There was only one boat that went to and from their ship island, and it was covered in slime. They must have salvaged it from the bottom of the sea, "I thought." I slid around the deck like it was December at night, okay.

When I arrived they were slow to assign me a task, and I have little faith that they knew what to do with someone like me. They invited me to live in one of their incredible computer whales, present –swarming - ominously above their oceanic palace. I joined the crew and got to work managing the raw data it had collected. I saw myself in there. I saw everyone I knew in there – in its head, its eyes, and its mouth. To those below – indeed, those who persecuted me – it was a position to command envy. From their side of the world it would appear that I was in a position to call the shots, but those with perspective, or even those who knew how to pay attention, knew better; we knew how to think better, too, thanks to them.

There I am, sitting up front amid the air intake, running my hands through its weirdo fingers.

The Imagine

They call me chicken kid.

Decoder Chopp.

Someone once told me that the best way to find my father was follow a long and twisted trail of cocaine.

He'd been killed years before and they ground his body into powder. They bleached the powder and cut it like a pile of cocaine. Then they cut some cocaine with the cut powder; like a knife. Somewhere in there they started selling it,

I started looking online one year later. I became aware of the internet after everyone else. I was late to the game, but when I showed up, I had a fog horn taped to my hand and a mouth two sizes too much.

I paid for the internet with bits of my guts. I wore shirts that explained how cool it was that I was on the internet.

Anyone that could know, did know.

There was a website that said there was a chatroom, and there was a chatroom that lead to a forum cause nobody worth a damn chats. I learned that on my third day. Real people post signs and use symbols.

I was a real person. I know how to draw.

There was a website about my father and the mystery what hurricaned him into the present. Everyone wanted to know about Bandana Powder.

They wouldn't tell me who came up with that name. Sometimes they gestured passively at some surrealist fucking bot that might not have even existed.

So I didn't want to exist it.

Nobody wanted to field any questions, or if they did, give real answers. I put my guns to it and made them believe that I was blood and I had a stake in some sort of legend that, I guess, *maybe*, concerned my dead drug father. They didn't want to know why. They didn't want to know anything except what they had a stake in, which was escapist fantasy. About him.

They had a stake in me, and I wasn't what they wanted. They manifested themselves as bitter smoke people, leaving everything to the imagination. From their direction, though, they would be imagining me, and kept me at a distance so they could have their charade.

I found one person who would give me the time of day; a man who sent me a private message with a penis watermark.

He told me the place to look was a concert venue called Bottle's.

I wasn't that far from it. Nobody's far from dirt, past tense.

Pinoy Cerebellum.

Concert venues only work at night so I showed up at midnight. I was dressed fine but not too fine; coarsely chopped. I didn't want them suspecting me but I needed their admiration.

Otherwise I'd have no reason to walk anywhere. Otherwise, as assured by a lifetime of social interaction, *the jig would be up*.

There was a DJ up high looking like he had to pee really bad. All the colours he represented were dulled blacklights. His face was just a bunch of creases that made him look out of place. Everyone else lurched around to music nobody could ever really like. The acoustics of the room made it into something else; like the sounds of a body.

It was there to be there, because it had to be there. They were there cause they had to be there; there needed to be someone dancing. And eagles don't fly in flocks but egos do. It cost fifteen dollars for the privilege.

Diesel Magistrate.

I was looking for the beginning of a coke trail. I was looking for a doorway to the past, guided by jokers made out of smoke living on the electroweb. I looked up at the DJ and he looked back down at me.

I pointed to my nose and then the corner of my eye. Coke and tear. The second one's up to something like nonsense. I could see the wheels turning in his head, warped by powder that might have been my dad. It was a weird situation.

But he got where I was going. He gestured over to a door beside the men's washroom entrance. He clapped his hands and flashed me some sort of gang sign.

I don't know what animal it looked like cause I was already turning my head. And just like that I was out.

Nikolai Icicle

And just like that, I was in; *in it*. The walls might have been bent and rippled, but the place was draped in black and purple and vibrations.

The DJ had directed me into some sort of backroom; dark velvet with a ripple of silhouettes waving in front of it. That's what it was.

There were thin figures walking back and forth. Not pacing; they had a purpose. You could read it in their stride. On it.

Many of them stood before a 2 way mirror looking out onto the dancefloor; out onto an arena of blacklights and lasers where I was not long beforehand. They didn't look like they recognized me.

There was no mirror from where I was standing before, which meant they were looking through an illusion wall. Or maybe nobody looked to the left.

They all had limp strings hanging from their fingertips. They had no weight to them, like yarn or something, right-?; frayed ends like they'd been bitten off.

I wondered aloud if they were puppetmasters. Nobody heard me, and nobody saw me, because I was for certain *back there* that nobody looked left.

Constantine Slice.

One of the things craned its head in front of me. It had no face, but the sound of teeth chattering came out of where it ought to be. The sounds gave it some shape- a proximity which gave way to memory - and if the shape was to be trusted its mouth was up at the crown of its head.

My mother left me a note, allegedly written by my father before he disappeared.

The note said that anything up by the crown is not to be trusted.

I kept that in mind as its head got closer. I wondered aloud if I was inventing clues. Of course nobody answered.

The thing extended its hand with some pills in it.

"I'm looking for powder. I don't like dirty pills."

It curled its fingers around the pills like a flower dying in fast forward.

In the back of the room was a staircase made of old car parts. Pills told me to go down it, cause there was all the cocaine in the world near the bottom. Pills didn't so much speak as it thrust its finger forward, then back then forward back forward back.

The cocaine it promised was not at the bottom, but in a levitating pool one fathom above the bottom.

And what was on the bottom? – It wouldn't say. It just offered me pills again.

I put it out of my mind.

Led Pillock.

I took stock of my life leading up to that point. Try as I did- *and I did try* – I couldn't conjure up a single memory of my father. I had clues and stories and legend. I was all about the alchemy of mine own mind but I wasn't getting everywhere.

Tires and shrapnel fell as I descended down the stairs. The music shrank like a balloon ascending. I had learned not that long prior that all the important messages in my life were given during the transition between worlds. From music to choking I would descend into. I felt like revelation time was behind me and I was in for a world of sick.

Denzel x White.

Five steps from the bottom there was a disc filled with cocaine, humming like it was trying to get in on the music that, really, honestly, come the fuck on, you could never hear from that depth.

There are two important phone calls and I'm going to talk about them for a minute here.

In the first phone call to my mother – *the egg mama* - weeks prior, I was trying to get any real stories or real information with which to make a picture from. Whenever I threw a hook, she batted it away with the same fucking silver gold diamond fucking paw; "Just make up some stuff. I don't know." She said I should imagine him as he should have been. I told her that there as a subculture of maniacs already doing that. She didn't seem to care. I told her that the grass was greener in the honest man's yard and I wasn't so old as to be unable to jump any fence, or a series of fences, or kick down a gate. She sounded so tired of life.

You can't reason with a tired person. I injected my brain with the stuff of life and pledged to go deeper.

Days prior, for the *second* call, I had called her up and asked her what my father's name was. She wouldn't tell me because she said it would make the whole ordeal too real.

I inquired as to what ordeal she was speaking of. She hung up the phone. When I called back, a robot told me that the phone was being destroyed.

Immediately after the phone call I began obsessing over his name , because it seemed like a logical place to start, and truly the only place to be, not having a name or a picture or anything genuine to go on.

And I refused to believe the people on the electroweb.

Because that way madness lies.

So as I stood there above the halo plate filled with mystery cocaine – all the cocaine in the world? – I was at a loss for words. I wanted to say his name, but even if I could...

Citrate Mike.

One of those god damned creatures was standing against the wall at the very bottom. All around was dusty rock, lit up like an excavation. I could hear the thing's forehead teeth chattering excitedly. I could tell it was watching me with alien relish. However wary I was of these things, I was fixated on the cocaine, as its presence in the suspect club and the conspiracy of the patrons had me connecting dots and deciding that my father was probably in there. I shook myself out of the thought trance and hollered over to the lone creature: "What's up with this cocaine? Is my father in there?" It nodded like it was about to reach climax. I wasn't sure if the thing spoke English, or if it was just providing positive reinforcement because, truthfully, everyone would do all that cocaine. Everyone in the world. They just need to hear "yes" enough.

I stepped onto the platform and kneeled down into the pile. I stuck my hand down and couldn't feel a bottom. I grabbed a palmful of coke and sniffed it quick. It got up into my brain and had me revelationizing faster- *more efficiently*- than ever before. I became a mirror to figures walking away from me. I turned into backs and exists, and disappearing and rejection. I started doing a lot of cocaine. Even then I wondered why I was doing it. It's not incestuous if it's cannibalism. And it's not tragic if it's crazed. My brain began racing towards oblivion. I started to imagine what my father was like, and who killed him and why. I began to wonder why my mother didn't want to talk about him, and why the powers that were allowed me to get involved if the situation called for someone to be silenced. My mother started by giving me no answers. Then the world gave me fake answers. Then I went back and she told me how to make my own answers. When I went to find someone else's, I ended up in a ring of perverts watching me do cocaine like a sicko. There were more of them by the time I got to the third handful. I had told myself the previous paragraph in the breadth of a five second. There were seven of them watching me, giddy and ridiculous. I looked up and couldn't understand how I got so far down. I kept at the coke because, when you get lost in your own thoughts, you become a creature of habit.

Brazil St. Dirge.

"What was his name?!" I screamed at them. They didn't say anything. A couple of them waved me on, encouraging me to keep going. Oddly enough I felt pretty good playing by their rules. I wondered aloud if my mother was trying to teach me pure imagination. I wondered in the form of a yell if she was trying to teach me how to conjure things without support; how to be in control. That would be something, she might have thought. She destroyed her phone to give me power. She might have thought. She had power over me because we existed on an established timeline and she beat me to it. In the world of smoke and monsters I was a moving target. The world wanted me to sacrifice truth for imagination, or vice versa, and the agents of either party wanted me to believe that the 2 could not be reconciled. In the middle of it all was a fathomless hole of cocaine, with me presiding over it like some sort of tyrant.

I learned on the message board that Bandana Powder was a very rare type of cocaine mixed in with dead people; usually criminals, bandits, and revolutionaries. It was, as a result, very

popular with other criminals, bandits, and revolutionaries. It was less superstition and more rite of passage, or so I gathered from others who, like me, became lost in the smoke. Someone of them became part of it once they figured out what was going on. Of course they would never talk directly to me; *I was a deviant*.

I looked up and there were perverts getting off to me running at destruction in their cellar. I should never have trusted anything that had money tied up in a night club. I'd like to say I knew better so I will. I took a cue from my mother and kept that one to myself.

By the seventh shotgun blast of coke I was at the crucible of creation, driven only by the frenzy of self realization and the knowledge that I knew it all along and the penultimate question mark of why I didn't do it sooner. I had the components. I had the people. I had the life, but didn't do anything. I figured that was part of it. I jumped out of the bottomless coke halo and darted up the stairs. I felt a mania throbbing in my thorax. I could hear spidery footsteps from the bottom. As I ascended up, it struck me how horrifying that situation was. They could have killed me like possessed lepers; hungry and deranged. They could have tortured and murdered me, or raped me, or all of it. I put it out of my mind.

Lingwald Price.

I burst out onto the dancefloor feeling smoked out and livid. Nobody looked at me, and nobody was trying to stop me. I imagined that I'd inhaled my dead father, made possible by the egg mama - and walking the line between worlds, still felt at a distance. The sons of nerds who claimed my father for the world of imagination bought into me; I felt their agitated eyes on every pore. From this corner - that corner - I spied dark figures not unlike the perverts who brought me to oblivion. The egg mama had a plan, and the sickos had a plan, and the internets had a plan; I was the only one who wasn't scheming. I transformed it into liberation and stomped along fenceposts like a fucking juggernaut. I went over to the bartender: "Give me a bottle of blue stuff." He pulled his fist out of his mouth and slid a tall bottle of bright blue liquid to me. "This had better be liquor," I threatened, "Or I'm gonna accomplish some bad shit." I broke the neck of the bottle off in my hands and poured it all into my stomach. I could tell that this pleased the audience. I began hypothesizing that my father - Mr. Bandana Powder - met a similar end. His power came from his silence, but the closer I kept my cards to my chest, the crazier I got. As I finished the bottle of blue stuff, I revolutionized that I could not be what was established. And no matter what, I wasn't going to outsmart the perverse who want to see people try and, well, anything really. That's their power.

I took control by dancing. For the moment I surrendered the fence, and the shades of colour and the facts, and in a mad power grab, made up my own shit. I was also drunk and fucked up on cocaine, but neither make geniuses; if anything, I would have been a thousandfold more effective with a clear head. People started paying attention once I started burning up the dance floor. All eyes on me.

Dancing sucks by the way.

I'll never know what my father died for, but I knew him well enough to slam a tree down on the hemlock that spread across his grave.

Devils became planets that hung in orbit around me, unable to be affected. The laws of the universe turned me introverted like a collapsing star- so brilliant and absolute – and that's how I beat them.

Sort of. If I was a black hole the whole story would be easier.

But it's the only reason I'm talking to all of you like real people.

Gore St.

Let me tell you-
If you'll let me –

About how I was overtaken; on a 1:30 in the PM drive on Christmas day through a ewnfauux ghost city -!

I was dominated. Not shrilly. Not *coyly*.

The sky was the shape of a gun, and in spite of the truth of it, things were good.

Something happened because the stage demanded it.

I discovered Gore St. that day. I didn't stand a chance.
I'll tell you all about it.

The sign said "Gore St." but it might as well have been a woman in peril flagging me down. She might as well have been naked and on a pile of money.

I stopped the car up on the sidewalk because I knew I wouldn't be penalized, but if anyone came across it, unlikely as it may have been, I would be glorified. It was the best idea I ever had. I entered Gore St on a high. I walked through the valley while being several miles above it. I fixed the black bandana tied around my head.

The stretch itself was as barren as the rest of the city but there was something that washed over me once I stepped past the sign. The sky was a different shape. The colours passed through a different prism. The air was a different weight – maybe – or maybe it was some indistinguishable slant.

I was stepping lively because these things both aroused and terrified me.
The fences on either side of me had necklaces hanging off them. At least, for the first bit. There were pearls and there was silver and there were charms. I couldn't bring myself to touch them. I couldn't bring myself to stray off course. That was the arousal being slowly unbalanced.

After the fences ended there was a yawning infinity of butcher shops.

"This is where all the butchers must work," I said to myself.

"Don't talk to yourself. Someone might hear you. And then they won't want to talk to you," I continued.

I wouldn't have felt any better if someone else said it. But that thing that washed over me – Water? Bile? Xenoclassic? – made it easier to act just a little bit crazy.

I smiled a lot there. The chuckles that escaped had a truth to them that was beyond me.

Both sides of the street were lined with butcher shops, their architecture something nostalgic- something that never happened, though- so it seemed like an illusion breaking out of fiction.

I saw butchers working through the windows. They were nailing slabs of meat to the wall. It was like looking through a tilted magnifying glass. It was like looking through the eyes of a lunatic in its death throes.

I couldn't find an animated face in the lot. I tasked myself to find a living thing and I couldn't do it. On the rare occasion that they noticed me through the glass their eyes rolled back into their heads. Not literally, not really, not even a little. In hindsight it was their heads turning inside out.

But the windows were foggy so it might not have even happened.
The scales were tipped too far for resuscitation. I was so scared that it wasn't a human feeling.
I might have said "yes."
I might have whispered something. I can't remember anything but it left a cancer that reminds me of what I might have been.

Out the corner of my eye I saw a pair of mad dogs. Just before zero in my peripheral vision I saw movement; something I hadn't seen in however long it had been. I turned to decide if I should be darting, but it turned out that it was just a pair of garbage bags.
They were dumped along the sides of a yellowed carriage, almost as if they were lowered from wires.

Years later I would learn that they were, in fact, a pair of mad dogs.
Years later I would learn that I was, in fact, not human.
Years before I would wonder if such a thing were possible.
Currently I wonder how I prepared myself for it.
But this isn't about me.

There was a sunset and that sunset was the end of the street.
My head swiveled around to take in a memory so pungent as to be burned into my skull instantly; the bizzarity of it causing the swivel to stop short.

But there was more to come.
From mine left crept a half Chapel.
There's much time for that sentence to settle but there's no time.
There was a church split down the middle with one half disappear'd.

The fence around the church was draped in bracelets and necklaces and hats just like the fences at the summit of the street were. Every step made me painfully aware of myself.
There was no municipality to cast a light on the place. Nothing but me and my loud fuckin' steps. Like a horse shoved into a shoe being thrust down by falling bridges. I'm wearin' big boots.

As the ambassador to humanity I stepped through where the gate should have been had it not been ripped off by mad dogs.

I instant turned paranoid. I hadn't noticed the wind on my back until it died. I hadn't noticed the push until the arm evaporated. And I hadn't appreciated the exit until the option was removed.

There were no thoughts of following through with an escape and I found that instantly troubling. I tried to turn around but was unable. I tried to imagine myself walking back through the gate but the pieces didn't fit. I had to come to terms with the fact that I was unable to leave the courtyard of the church. City of the dead, city of the damned – how did they find someone stupid enough to wander in with a pulse? How did they know my name?

"For whoses black heart is my life being sacrificed for the moisture?"
The words "onward and upward" gave me strength.
Strength enough to move in the direction I didn't want to go.

I turned a corner and there was a half priest standing amid a tornado victim.

What struck me about him was that he wasn't cut as cleanly as the building. He looked like he was torn at the seams. He was literally splintered. Horrifying. Mesmerizing. Reappear'd mummified despot.

"You're not from around here, are you?" he asked.

I tried as hard as I could not to stare wide eyed at his glaring figure and failed. He didn't seem offended but I've been wrong before.

I said "no."

"You look a little bit lost" he continued. He began to turn and grab something.

"Yeah, a little bit. I don't even know how to get out of here."

The priest grabbed something from some table, chattering against the floor like the teeth of a nervous idiot. It might have been across the room. My memory of the incident verifies it. Across the room. Across the country. You had to be there.

He was holding a Rubik's cube in his hand. He began walking away from me – past me- and if he were whole, through me. He was breaking apart the thing in his hand; his fingers were cracking through it like spear thrusts. When the pieces fell, they sat neatly in the distance, far against whatever wall.

"You can't leave the way you came in," he began. I fixed my position to watch him walk to the stage. He stopped at the base of the altar. He didn't turn around, but...

"You can't leave with the same parts you came in with."

There was a yellowed, gored carriage sitting 3-d'd in the foreground. The steps were hiding behind it, praying for camouflage, accepting fashion with a red-lipped pout. Years before I would learn that it was attacked by crazed dogs.

I shot him an eyebrow with the most extreme arc I could muster. He turned and continued walking to the altar. He might as well have been on rails. I might as well have been chewing on something.

He eclipsed the carriage, and as he passed it, it had become a fixture and was no longer recognized by conventional perception.

He climbed the stairs and knelt down behind the thing. I heard what I can only describe as a deep yawning, and then there was nothing. Something filled the room – like the ambience of a video being played in an enclosed space. Something turned on but I had no inkling that the priest was anywhere.

Someone had grabbed me by both sides of the head.

There was a clamp around my face. There was something exerting focus and tension. I began walking towards the only exit.

I began walking towards the door.

I began walking towards the gate.

I drove past the spectres – the million eyes staring / the million arrows elevating – and drove towards home. There began a pressure against my person, and I knew I had to do something. I removed the black bandana from my head and slumped it over a vacant pole on the fence.

Immediately the force lifted. So powerful it was that the day before, had I imagined it, there was a vacuum. There was dust; chalk having been crushed in a fist.

I stepped first foot off the property and exhaled as deep as never. I remember stepping lively. I remember the air touching my face again. I remember the notion of jumping off an airplane, just before letting go and falling. The point of impact and the point where the brain shuts off.

I was out of Gore St. I decided to circle around and get back to the car. I decided to bookend some sort of hell with dead air space.

Years later I might learn that nothing happened at all, but I have the cuts to prove otherwise.

The Telltale Sign of Doctor Pornogrind (People Sex in Space)

"I'm obsessed with... *People doing their job.*"
- Spiderjaw Slagg

PART I

This is a world where everyone knows what they're doing.

One year – a year marked by the abolition of denim but a renaissance of metal shavings – there arrived a young entrepreneur carrying with him a new idea. He came in on the Westerly Trade winds under cover of night.

He came in with a book on *tapin'*.

It was titled "A Layered Novella on Tapeworm Technique."

Tapin' was an art form not unlike graffiti painting. The difference comma *difficulty* was that tapin' involved electrical tape, duct tape, or custom tape that could withstand the elements for as long as possible.

Tape, like history and its nature (historically,) peeled away, *not again!* Within a week or two, it was gone. It was like *ghostwork*.

So these tape artists became *ghosts*.

Or so they wished they were called. Everyone else had more utilitarian names for them.

Like *criminals*. Or *idiots*.

Or *Ingmar Bergman* cause nobody knew who that was.

A Layered Novella on Tapeworm Technique.

The whole scene gradually, as the decades passed, attached an unimaginable finesse to the work, the word, and the definition in the social repertoire. There was something to it; chemically added. Professionals emerged, and with them came elitist perusals.

But it wasn't until the appearance of the *Layered Novella on Tapeworm Technique* that cursive entered the subculture's lexicon.

But...

Way back there in '68 *they* installed a scary metal jackal in the middle of Chicago.

They also invented families.

They signed a multi-trillion dollar contract with the Parliament of Motion Pictures to cement the necessity of family in the psyche *en mobb*.

But then there was *them*.

Them brought two things to the table: the number 3,000 as an appropriate unit of measure, and a prototype what would be sold to third party companies and refined as they saw fit, in media and in myth and even in *measure*: the man having an affair.

They and *them* were very rarely seen during the same time of day, on account of them forced to operate in the same city. Their numbers grew manypalmed, but they also grew dark, like waves crashing against reefs in the furthest fathoms of the ocean.

As with every historic conflict it was nature what stirred their bloodshot juggernaut- *plural* - awake.

And oh yeah, it –*plural*– knew how to break cities.

PART II

The surfacing of the book made underground headlines. *Them* and *they* began a bidding war for the rights over the new literature. While the practise of tapin' was long ago bought out by the public domain, one could *direct* and *massage* it. And the only one that would do would have to be many; many, many dark and fathomous hands.

The absentee auctioning was fast and deep. Like sex with a furious dyslexic.

The chips on one side were those things that inspired a statue: jackals. *They* were responsible for all of *the lot of* them. I was *they's* secret weapon. Nothing inspired the right sort of awe like a bunch of jackals.

It was *them* that came to the table with an intellectual.

Them'd found a man named Dr. Pornogrind, a man who could use his doctorate in "the devil's work" to bring them victory.

The drug trade in Chicago had the architecture of a spider, and beneath the umbrella of its thorax there were gorings that were not by creatures of this world. The trafficking included a mysterious antidote (tm) called Victory Seven, a chemical that had sneaked in from the city *o'er yonder*. The devices – we call them devices cause they might not be flesh – ran the thing from the same underground that the tapin'ists frequented. Some say they were related. Some even said the 2 groups were one and the same.

They might also say Victory 7 exists.

It was another institute under public domain. Nobody could really control it because the hand what guided it did it so mysteriously. It couldn't be approached. *They* and *them* didn't try to comprehend it. It was one of the few things beyond them.

The roundtable meeting that saw the two parties meeting after ten years of radio silence was held in a room that quickly took on the ambient of a crypt.

Dr. Pornogrind brought a much needed high hat with him.

He knew what to do with goons. He'd been tanglin' with them for a dog's spell.

He was also the only one there who could be described as having the confusion of an outsider.

But nobody talked. Nobody *ever talked*.

The important people sent messages through tubes. The only noises that came from them were hearty guffaws or scoffs. Scary figures on either side of the table ran their hands down their chins, or pointed at their throats, or tapped their fingers in their palms.

The good doctor was there in spirit turned flesh. He wasn't an expert on the feud and had not the parts to deal with it all. He looked around nervously whenever he failed to break his concentration with the floor.

Before long they'd reached some conclusion; something *like an agreement*.

Once the room emptied and he was given his orders he was married again.

"Figure out to get that book before we vanish you," one of them said behind his back.

When he turned all he saw was a blackbird turning the corner.

So he went out into the streets with a pack of jackals in quiet pursuit. He also went out with a palace of good ideas. He went with his hands out holding an invisible gun.

The second-last thing his superiors told him before relinquishing their protection was "don't let anyone see your face."

He didn't give credence to their reputation of absolute literality. He knew they knew what they were talking about, but he knew it already so their sentence was only half heard. He was already planning his route via alleys and the subterranean.

The smell of chemical recreation perspired from above. He was fist deep in it.

The city hoisted its knees up.

He sought out the tapin' community as a professional.

It was carefully measured, non-documented knowledge that the most precious commodity on the streets was mimicry.

Kept out there in the palace were necessary memories of mime practice. There was a lot to know but a true master improvised. The streets were never about knowledge.

The best culprits didn't talk. Sadly, this was where the feral beasts had heads and shoulders up on him. Happily, jackals never approach calmly. Ecstatically, Dr. Pornogrind knew magic.

Depressingly, he had to go underground.

PART III

A trained intellectual, Dr. Pornogrind knew how to track. Not hunt, but rather follow translucent words. He knew how to hunt abortions. He knew how to pursue monsters what had their existence debated.

He located a gang of tapin'ists at work behind a haunted Chinese food restaurant in the downtown core of the city.

A tornado of haunting screams came at him from his backside. He paid it enough mind to use it as propulsion towards the huddled peoples.

One of them turned around and spotted him before he could get the drop on them and gain the high ground. The man narrowed his eyes and raised his chin. He stood up tall. His hands were at attention, but kept low. He was communicating in signs.

The good doctor buried *deep* the telltale sign of his agenda. The telltale sign would be *caring*. He couldn't *care*. He had to be curious, but only to give him a reason to go forward. And he could only go forward because that was what he was raised to do. There could be no thoughts of going *back*, and certainly none of going back with *information*. There could be no trace of reason. They'd be able to see it painted all over him.

PART IV

"What's this?" the kid asked.

Dr. Pornogrind cleared his throat like something was actually wrong with it.

"Hear you guys are the best around. I have some questions."

He knew flattery wasn't even anything. He knew everyone wanted to be a grown up.

"Oh yeah? How's that?" he asked.

"Well," explained the good doctor, "I tell ya, ya see those things up there?"

He pointed up to the crest of a nearby building. The legion of heads that hung over it were jackals. Their eyes were hungry and feverish.

"Those things," he continued, "are after your new Jesus. I'm from the government. They sent me to tell him what to do."

The kid had his eyes fixed on the creatures.

"Naw, man..." said the kid, "he doesn't do that shit."

The doctor's brow piqued. "What?"

Just then, a hail of bullets rained down into the alleyway. The jackals were shooting from their eyes. The artists scattered and the kid darted after them.

The doctor took off after his prey. The kid's dark denim parts bobbed and leapt at him in the occasional light. The kid dove through a window, but just then the doctor saw one of his comrades through a narrow alleyway. He quickly changed his chase, hoping one of them would go back home.

The second artist led him through a dead cabin and down a staircase made of water droplets, down, down into the subterranean domain of the artists.

A shrill, surreal barking scraped at their backs. The jackals were closing in, machine gun eyes at the ready. French knife mouths open- always open.

The watery stairs lead down into what seemed like a brothel for bad ideas. Bohemian-lookin' folks stepped lively at all angles. The kid had long ago noticed the doctor in pursuit, but being hunted alike gave them cause to live together, if only until one or the other could figure out a better idea.

Down there: one quarter was a shanty town, and a third was like a construction yard. And then it was just full of people, and half-skyscrapers rising out of the ground like long, scary fingers. The dirt was marbled with papers.
“Everyone hates it here!” someone screamed.

Goons howled after him from eons populated by geographies of hell.
Dr. Pornogrind, you know, was the last word on solving problems. He had solved problems for the queen, the Icebergs, and the lizard people.
He was the one who answered the mercy horn of the townsfolk.

Dr. Pornogrind pulled one of the people aside.
“I need to find the man who wrote the new Tapin’ book everyone’s talking about. I have some very important information for him,” he said.
The guy slapped the doctor right in the face and kept on walking. He was a fistful of yards away when he spun around and threw an ecstatic finger westerly. He was skipping backwards, smiling, and completely insane. Nevertheless, the doctor followed his directions.
But before he did, he screamed “you people are not the future!”

PART V

Across the way there was a titanic shovel machine. It made a population clearing around it; nobody came within 30 metres of the thing. Bizarre flora made of discarded fabric and dirty toys crowded around it. The good doctor stepped cautiously through the garden.
The brows of all within hollershot began to furrow. Couples muttered and those flying solo crept close.
Roped to the long arm of the shovel was a decomposing body with a sign knifed into it.
The sign read “Starving in the Belly of a Whale.”
It didn’t take the dark arts to figure that the body was that of the literati responsible for the book.
“I’m a curious kitty,” muttered the doctor to himself.

The doctor turned to survey the crowd. He didn’t see anyone with a Christ complex. In a world of self-diagnosis there were no martyrs save for the one nobody would pay attention to.
The good doctor cleared his throat for the second time that day. There was a disappointed surprise drawn on him, like a father.
Dreams of a discussion with the surrogate father of the counter-culture died. The notion that alot of people had seen the doctor’s face gestated into a fact. His superiors, in their finite vengeance, would be up to something. The jackals were on their way and nobody in the vicinity was capable of a great idea.

He snapped the skull off the spine and hooked his fingers through the sockets. He walked across the garden towards the people, and with their rapt attention as assured as the skull in his hand, he asked them all "where do you people get your drugs?" A quick succession of gunshots rang out in the distance. The mob turned away, but- "Was it them? The *jackals*?" he asked with a loud, commanding voice. Nobody turned back to answer. "Shut up!" he yelled. With fingers tense against the bone he stormed off towards the commotion.

A nearby nebbish pulled his fist from his mouth and with eyes as wide as his mouth, asked "what are *you going to do?!?*" Dr. Pornogrind pulled a mysterious cigarette from his front breast pocket. "I've had it up to *here* is what I'm gonna do." He raised his opened palm to the sky and clenched it tightly. The granite above their heads collapsed and fell outward as if being sucked away by the cold vacuum of space. The moonlight poured in through however many man's days walks worth of stone stood between them and freedom. Just as soon as some illusion of fresh air hit their faces, the jackals stumbled out from behind a dead man's house. Their heads jerked madly from left to right, and upon catching the position of their prey, threw the dirt up behind them. The clips in their throats were reloading. Obituaries dripped from their mouths. Five turned into fifteen and then twenty and then thirty five. The jackals had called their brethren to take down the intellectual. They'd feasted on the youth but kept nigh enough room for his flesh between them. Maybe they wouldn't eat him. Maybe they'd just chew. Maybe they'd throw him up. Maybe they'd cut him and leave him for dead. He wondered aloud to whoever was around. Oddly enough, there were people around. A crowd of twenty five clung to he who blew a hole to the outside.

"I'm a gambling man," said the doctor. His fingertips lit up with fluorescent blankets trailing behind them. A surrealist machine gun materialized in his hands, and seconds later he opened fire. The bullets struck their adorable frames like trains. The bones struck surrounding surfaces with the momentum of an atomic blast. "They call me the house cause I kill jackals that sell drugs." A dainty little thing asked him how he knew. Nobody could know. Nobody believed them when they tried to let other people know. Nobody gave assistance when they turned foul. "They smelled like LSD. And this gun's never lied to me before."

When he returned to them he told a story on how the man responsible for their supposed literature had committed suicide because he was insane, thus choking credibility, and how he discovered and murdered down much of the underground Victory Seven cartel.

"You come back empty handed," said a slender planetlike figure.

"I opened the drug market and proved there's no such thing as a prophet."

"This is not the devil's work!"

"No, this is brain magic."

Chicago enveloped the changes that had occurred during those 24 hours.

The spider of drug trafficking hanging over the city shattered, with the pieces forming micro-umbrellas under which the city's artists, their population in an upheaval, could discuss what medication to prescribe to their deadman counter culture.

Herr Anno Domini Terrorist

A Based on a True Story by DCompose

Curtains open on: Washington DC. Circa: Dire times.

While the graveyard of what was the World Trade Centre was being replaced by an architectural clusterfuck of retardation most foul, the next catastrophe was being planned for elsewhere, but at the same time, *there again*.

And that plan was still being drawn by the same ireful hand.

The terrorists, in their infinite wisdom, were capitalizing into familiar fray with eyes on unfinished business, not unlike the American heroes they observed in dark corners.

Secrets were whispered for yeas beforehand, however, on the other side. They had their own plans to preempt another attack on the Pentagon. Bizarre pages circulated into thickly gloved hands and then into a furnace, never to be leaked to the cockeyed public.

I was mid afternoon when a suicide bomber stepped into the pentagon, which had been redesigned into a portly tetrahedron.

He went in through the front doors into a lobby that exploded in all directions in majesty, not fire – not a suicide bombing. It was just a magnificent lobby.

In he went and curious he grew at the brickly unmovement.

He coyly approached a motionless person and gabbed it by the shoulder. He stumbled back upon pulling it around, the weight of the thing uncommon- his strength grossly exaggerated.

It was a pale, pale mannequin. A mannequin, a mannequin.

“Y...you son of a bitch! *You son of a bitch!*” he screamed.

The suicide bomber stumbled back in shock. He darted around the lobby in a fever, grabbing and pulling at the crowd.

They were all mannequins.

The whole place began to spin and blur just like in the films he watched in dark corners.

“No...*NO!*”

He threw his body back through the front doors and into the streets in a panic.

He surveyed the landscape with eyes what hung below a sweating brow.

There was silence - and nothing else.

He stepped carefully through the ghost town, on cold pavement, struck by rhythmic odors as if the wind had digested a lot of hell. Everyplace was populated by mannequins, dressed and arranged to recreate a moment frozen in time, overlorded by an ill wind.

In his peripheral vision he was a figure move. He jerked his head towards it, only to catch a witness to nothing.

"Wh... Who's there?"! He shouted. His eyes grew wide, and then stern, and then both.
Silence.

From another direction – far flung and behind the greenery – a scuttling.
No shapes and no movement.

"I'm gonna... I'm gonna fuck you up! *I'm gonna fuck you guys up!*"

His movements grew uneasy – uncertain.

Indeed, his breathing was that of someone in danger.

He walked back to the commercial aeroplane parked around the bend.

His breathing had calmed into a frustrated acceptance. It was an interior damning, and cursing, and fist clenching.

The pilot met him halfway through the plane with the speed of a runaway bride.

"What happened?" he asked, palms open and eyebrows raised like wonder flags.

The bomber was pensive for a moment.

"Just... *just fly.*"

He turned around and began walking down to the tail end of the plane.

"Just fly away from here."

Trip1937

Like every story worth examining this comes from the corpse of a kid as small as a shell.
Imagine it - through violation and some tempest of perversion.
No façade in residence.

It's the story of soap and communism.
It's a story about 1937.

Back then there was an idea and that idea was calamity and there was someone lingering inside of it. He was there, sitting dimly like a cyst, standing like a prisoner, occasionally sleeping in the skin of a victim.

It was some manner of kid sitting beneath pipes and adjacent to lurching cogs. He had a home nested inside some infinite archaic machine, stranded on some creaking plateau overlooking a pit in the same manner that a pitchfork driven into the dirt overlooks a garden. Occasionally murmurs and purring noises would fly out from the bottom of the thing, from deep down in a bottomless. In front of him – to the left of him – to the right of him – there were towers of similar architecture; cogs and poles and doors serving no purpose. I'll do you one better: it was like living inside a five dimensional clock, constantly aware of those dimensions that exist behind your life.

He was tasked by his imagination to kill the days that pocketed his youth like no other. One day he found a piece of wood buried beneath a pile of rust and splintered poles, back near the base of the fork where he seldom sat.

He couldn't do a thing with the board until he looked 'round a corner one day and found a thick black marker driven into a pumpkin discarded *it must have been* days before. He took the marker and began drawing a grid on the board and that grid made no sense. Unbeknownst to him, the kid had a million friends that watched from longyawned plateaus. Once he began creating they found license to interfere.

They swung down to the prison on thick purple vines.
It was something incredible to behold. There was so many of them.
"What's all this then?!" asked a suspect with wavy metal hair.
"I'm making a game" replied the kid.
Someone at the back of the scene hollered with confidence on high.
"Do you have any idea who we are?!"
The kid made no suppositions and was not vile enough to describe the contrary.
He was wondering, though.
"No."
"We're communists god damn it all!"

The kid scratched his head because many of the strangers in the foreground had swastikas on their shirts.
"There's a swastika on your shirt" said the kid. It's been said.

Without pause, the robot hair replied: "We have no idea what we wear on our shirts. The decision was made for us."
And he said it as if there were more pressing matters.
"We've been watching you. You have to stop."

"But why?" asked the Kid, presupposing that they were on the same topic, "I'm enjoying myself."

From the back of the hoard there was a sharp scream, and then a vanish, as if someone fell off the edge and into the pit.

"You're waist deep in designing a decade that *can not happen*."

The kid was confused, yet still apprehensive towards the fly-by-night-faux-fascists.

"And what if I don't stop?" he asked.

"When we all die. We can't survive in the new world."

"Oh. Sorry."

This next part is important.

You see the world is structured like a train. And then the caboose of the thing lurched like waves crashing. At the front end there was a sharp follow through – far from the same severity, but more surgical – in the form of several gear coughing out a million wires, a million lengths of rope, and a million coils that grabbed and gripped the gathering.

They fought against it as would have anyone, and like anyone, they were broken and shoved into collapsed components.

It was suddenly dire that the game be completed. For some reason it was important to the world. No people from the past could stop it.

It's true.

The kid had invented 1937 with his irregular board game.

In the process he had also invented hygiene and the high concept of soap.

Don't wonder if he's still there because in the grand expelling of the hell that occurred soon after it's like he was never there at all. A volcano erupts beneath a big sick.

The story goes that years later at the World's Fair, a hole appeared in the sky. The monster of it blinded, killed, deafened many. After trials numbering in the dozens and casualties that numbered in the thousands it was discovered that the only way to defeat it was to clean it.

Wash it out. New big sick.

Story goes that thanks to 1937 they were able to save the world.

Story goes that fascism would catch a second wind but was ill prepared in the new world.

Story goes that 1937 was the year that reserved every calendar thereafter.

It's true.

THE END.

TO BE NARRATED IN SOMEONE ELSE'S MOVIE.

**Au Naturelle
(El Mannequin)**

“Those tyrannosaurus men throw'd in the know
You can kill the clouds but can't stop the snow “

– *Spiderjaw Slagg*

The days were blizzard when the round table connected.

A handful of dukes – I'm talking twelve - met to champion the tide of all things dire.
They sequestered themselves way out from footsteps and murmurs to discuss world affairs.
In some bunker, beneath some layered brick, surrounded by bones and echoes, they battled musings and threw condemnations across the place.
Twas the season, so it has been said.

While the air tightened and the sky took the shape of a concrete slab, there was much pitch ringing throughout the city. There was cheer and there was reflection stretched over all concerned.

There were slaves, but there was a very real pinnacle.
It was gorgeous there.

The dukes, however, regarded the season with the same components used to regard trash.
The room was dark and for all anyone knew it stretched back for infinity. Lights that threw cones down from above did so weakly, as if imagined in a delirium.
For all anyone knew they were not there at all.

Across town

“We must take action!” hollered Rocket to no one in particular.
The stumpy old man had worked himself into a delirium.
“Dollar signs escaping!” he continued.
The rest of the dukes observed with muted compliance.
No idea comes from one man, naturally.
Ideas are rebellious. Dangerously so.

Rocket leaned back into his chair like an exhausted balloon.
Dimitri took the floor. There was a momentum to his rising as if he was interrupted, but such was not the case: it fell off his cuff, but it fell into just the right parts of all the right people at all the right moments.

“Inquiries have been made. I think we have a something” he said.

Dimitri placed a *Pere Noel* hat on the table before the assembly.
He proceeded to place a second item on the table: a syringe.
“You dig?”

Certainly everyone wished that they did.
Dimitri, pausing perhaps for any supposed genius that might have been laying dormant, followed through.

"What must be achieved is utter reinvention."

Suspicious whispers had not yet begun.

"We will elect a new hero," he said. "We will subscribe our time to this task. In doing so we will have achieved the coveted phase one."

The air propelled from the raising of eyebrows washed over him. Rocket was the first, launching from murmur to declare in a break that astounded even the most tired of the table.

"And just how will replacement be sufficient to reinvent the season?"

Dimitri narrowed his eyes not viscously, but cleverly, as if it were all going according to plan.

"That leads cleanly into Phase Three."

The topic was laid in stone at that point and the project began double quick.

Rogues set out under tide of nightfall and returned with dozens of electives.

They kidnapped in the name of a campaign that could not be spoken of. Silhouettes stretched from the oddest corners and snatched an array of characters.

A blind butcher was dismissed, a slave was cast away, and a horseman was sent parading back. All seemed hopeless until a victim emerged. Something cold, something miserable, yes; one victim of the season.

"Not too dry" remarked Rocket.

The vivid sound of chin caressing caused the victim's thoughts to pause.

"Call off the search!" hollered a nondescript Duke with the tone of a madman.

The subject was an abuser- a self destructive gentleman whose arms were textured like eyes under stress.

He reminded them of dust.

He instigated thoughts of the sewer.

Those in audience pulled their faces from the trough with satisfied smiles.

Perhaps the irony spoke to them, reassuring them that they were, in fact, artists.

He shook and trembled inches from where the darkness became a deciding factor. The decision was made for them to regard him with the same components used to regard a canine.

A ten of guards slinked out from such a place, their features turned or reversed.

The addict was in a delirium that was put on partially by the room, partially by the abduction, partially by the barrage of comments made about him.

They were making it easier for him to die.

"Take him to the bay" ordered Dimitri.

A couple of goons with backwards heads escorted the subject away.

"Is all according to plan?" asked a Duke by the name of Legs.

"Ahead of schedule" assured Dimitri, "Bring forth the schematics."

The following week was one of suffering.

Death was nigh as every second passed at speeds that could not be expected.

Or so they made it appear.

The victim was throat deep in Phase One.

Phase One was summarized as the manufacturing of the rogue that would bring the mercy back; something of their design that they would control with the ease of brushing away a larva. The dukes were patient. They leaned back in their chairs, the sound of their breathing such a white noise as to sedate them. The victim emerged from the laboratories to much dialogue.

"The million dollar man arrives" remarked one of the more cynical Dukes, Arch Mason.

"Hold your comments for the impossible failure" snapped Dimitri with droll, soothing snappers. "Phase One is complete" he said. "Phase Two will be initiated at the close of the day. Questions, gentlemen?"

Duke Liquor cast a thrust on his verbs.

"Are you certain this will be completed by season's end?"

Dimitri turned frozen.

"It is not by season's end because season's end will be the moment to reap the success. To field your negativity; we are ahead of schedule. We have been over this. Tonight, we wine."

The front gates parted into a metropolis costumed beneath a thick blanket of snow. It gave the illusion of a grand mirror fallen over the city, illuminating the peoples non-coma'd to witness it.

From within the compound stepped a victim reinvented. The Dukes had transformed an addict into a hero for the layman- one under their strict guidance.

There was wax on his arms that had the texture of the letter 'k' overlapping. His eyes were fixed and dilated, but they were not fixed to be gazed into. The inside of his mouth was discolored something vile. If you saw him a story would write itself in your head.

A story of a villain that stole the skin of a honorable man.

Something not of this world; no, something pulled from the deepest recesses of the social imagination.

He perused streets and condemned the wicked. He made a mockery of industries that represented something alien to the people, triply so draped in a fallen mirror.

It took one half week for the reformed to enslave the hearts and spirits of the people.

He didn't sleep and he didn't stand still. He walked day and night, fixing and inspiring. He saved lives and played into grander schemes set up by the Dukes. One time he rescued a baby from a hole and another he saved a truck from an electrical fire. There was always a witness, planted or the other one. As the hours piled the number of witnesses compiled.

Networks in the Dukes' pockets trumpeted a second coming. Sleeper citizens were encouraged to circulate tales of wonder about him. His name was ballooned to the size of a comedy in bizarre robes. Spectacles grew grander and grander until the hero, the new icon, represented all things mankind thrived to achieve. The public crunched into a mob in his favour as the season reached the twenty fifth.

His legs were numb but all necessary receptors were long ago severed.

His body was telling him something, screaming, even, but his head was locked in a box. He began limping, but he neither noticed nor was able to notice. His tongue began to rot for reasons that confound and his eyes began to roll back into his skull. With every step he began to rot from the inside out. As he depressed into the street, some distant, whispering thought occurred: "What's going on?"

On the twenty fourth of December, the victim was confronted by a task force of officers who had already followed through. The officers had the death strike worked out in astounding detail before he could turn and address them.

The Dukes whispered from far flung catacombs and bullets ripped through his body.

As the clock tower at the center of town rang in the new day, his massacred body collapsed to the street.

What would have been spoken of as a climax was merely a comma in their grand script.

"Phase Three" assured Dimitri, "is underway despite the incidents encountered earlier."

Such incidents were not to be spoken of, lest encourage thoughts of negativity. Dangerously so. Rocket slid his right hand over the table.

"You've done it" he said as if he was certain the entire time.

"Save your praise until the seizure" countered Dimitri, rejecting his own acclaim.

The wounds that riddled the addict's body were not yet settled when the propaganda began.

Phase Three, the final phase of the plot, was described best as "complete destruction of the character, virtue, and philosophies of the hero."

The news networks began a tireless smear campaign all the following day.

Those sleeper citizens spread rumours and gossip about how their savior was a filthy junkie.

In short, they released the truth.

Such was the genius of phase three.

The Dukes waited eagerly- those superior waited patiently- until the crutch was eroded and inevitably broken.

The city, descending, would be caught by those that appear as cartoonist shadows rising from the darkness.

So was the plot described in great detail with no small amount of significance placed on the repetition of such, whenever there was break enough for one, and in lieu of such a thing, one would be created.

So sure were they in their grand script that they nearly avoided paying attention to it all.

Dimitri, at the very first meeting, on the very first record, announced, with no small amount of pride and confidence, that the only way to own a character was to break it and then rebuild it.

That Christmas saw the climactic rise and fall of a new idol, a modern proletariat that commanded all those enchanted by things by their hand but beyond their control.

Dimitri's smile curled into a scowl as his plan became a square slamming feverishly into a round hole.

The citizens- those bewitched- refused to reject him, refused to accept the stories, and refused to become injured.

There was no collapse. Rather, the wound cauterized with something healthier than they ever imagined. One could even say that old wounds were healed.

One could even say that they grew ten feet that day.

One could see the public covering all the ground around the cemetery. You could see them mourning in waves. You could hear not a thing when listening and everything over the silence.

The citizens saw the propaganda for what it was - a calculated attack.

Such a thing, they expelled from their mouths.

Dangerously so.

Dimitri sat down and Rocket took the floor.

An addict became immortal that day.

The gutter speaks scripts.

They just wanted to show them that they loved them. They practiced this with the skill of a butcher tumbling screaming through space.

Smoking, Radio

When I wouldn't quit smoking she left me for someone with a much upper head.
That was her reason and I don't doubt it not really.

We stopped talking, not because of the smoking, but because she feared the information I possessed – possess still.
We both knew why I smoked, and so when she left, she made sure to leave me a present so she'd say on my good side. Smoking and paranoia is what it is pretty really.

So here it is: I smoke because my head is full of terrible knowledge that, if processed into any transferrable form, even in passing, would cause her to change shape, perhaps to such a degree that it would unmake her, like stardust or junk or some whatever shit.

She wanted me to quit smoking and to replace it with some other repressive vice, like cuddling or listening. I said "no dice" and she claimed that I was performing racial profiling.¹⁶

In hindsight she was doing that simply to start the fight that ended us. She knew I was a huge racist when confronted.
She told me she needed a taller head, but I knew it was something she could live without.
I could have said I needed a girl with wheels. I have places I need to be.

Smoking doesn't repress it; it just distracts me, like a campfire. Like all fire, and smoke, and smoke when fire happens.
My suppressing of absolute power was not enough for her not to consider me weak willed.
One day I wrote down all my terrible, miserable, awful information and set it out to sea in a bottle.

The meat of it all comes one day where I was walking down the street and a gentleman with a handicappingly tall head rushed up to me and grabbed me by the collar. He insisted to know what I had done with my thoughts, and I said "I did nothing! Unhand me, vagabond guy!"
It turned out that my ex had suddenly morphed into a hare and then blinked right out of existence.

The punchline is that I sent out the info into waters that I knew were policed by pirates. The payoff for me is that I can say that my ex was killed by pirates in my name.

¹⁶ "I don't like being a cynic! It was their idea! I *fuckin' hate* being a hero for things so small! They don't even know what a Venn diagram is!" – Joker Grasshopper.

The Curse of the Renaissance Man

“- so bring it here.”

– *Spiderjaw Slagg*

Part I

The first thing to happen was the thought police. This is their story.

I was standing on a train platform one night. I was the only one there, and that troubled me because it made me realize that in a city of however million people, just then, nobody was going the same way I was. A bizarre sense of ownership clothed down over me. They don't like it when you smoke on the platforms, but as far as I knew, I was the last man on Earth so gambling with life was my highest priority.

So I did that. I smoked and I started thinking. And then I started remembering, and then I started piecing an extraordinary situation together.

I had to make it fashionable cause I knew someone was playing close attention.

One day I woke up in a world that permitted nothing less than absolute certainty. It was the thought police; they got into peoples' heads. A man much older than me, and by the unforgivitive transitive property, *wiser* than me, *ummmmm*, told me that hell was cyclical. That explains everything.

The thought police came upon the crest of an obsession holding documentation.

The sense of ownership what I bathed myself with had waterfell upon everyone, and soaked them throughthethrough for the best part of a decade. Nobody wanted to lose anything, ever. Nobody wanted to forget and nobody wanted to make a mistake founded on misinformation. Every action was either remarked upon in legal tender or written in public journals, with personal journals being reinforced with alien metals and things I can't even fathom *now* after committing the *worst* part of a decade researching.

Like books that lead to wars.

The thought police were the first universal authority on documentation of the rawest ideas what would eventually flower into actions, reactions, art, and science. It was the only way to *do it*. From the *fucking beginning*.

And where did they record it to? I ask this as quickly as I breathe cause I breathe as often as I wonder.

I guess they put it in some library. *Vault*. Anyone can get to it but nobody wants to. Nobody visits the government either. We might not be allowed, but I've never checked.

The only real evidence we have is pirated shit. There are magazines and channels and websites that get their hands on some juicy shit, and it's just about the only evidence we have that *this is a thing*.

I don't know how they select it and I'm putting all my money on the table that nobody else knows either. We all just hope they don't pick on us to be the next viral cautionary tale.

Because of it, in these modern times, one must police their own thoughts for anything embarrassing, treacherous, perverted, or horrible. Unless you want to be a rebel. Most people don't want to be rebels. Most people want to eat and be cool. I just want to be able to eat and be cool. As quickly as I breathe.

I was laying awake in bed suppressing the thoughts of suiciding someone. While their title read *police*, the reality screamed *witness*. If they found a rapist, the rape didn't stop. Unless the real police found out. Unless someone else did something. The danger was that someone perusing the allegedly *very much real* vaults would know everything. Police, mothers, friends, wives. Ghosts. Machines. Vanity took them to vice and vice took them to hell and they took me with them. Machines might know that I think about sex all the time. I don't expect them to understand. My mom might find out how little charity I have. But she's dead. Ghosts might find out what I've been wasting and they'd tell my mom. I suppress my nature for fear of ghost gossip.

They'd tell her how creative I still am. Was. *Will be*. They'd tell her how one out of every seventy five thousand will die for me. Then they'd tell her how poor and miserable I am. They'd explain the humbling frequency with which I fail. The thought police are the only ones buying what I'm selling, and as far as I know, they're ghosts too. Nobody wanted to read the stuff I was writing or watch the things I was recording. Last time she looked I was on the fast track. They shut me down since her passing.

I spent the whole night awake so I started the following day in a sleeplike trance. My worries were pale echoes- still trouble. It was good. My laptop hadn't been opened in weeks. My pens had bugs living in them. To be cool without being a rebel was a wire I refused to walk on. It was so sharp. It'd cut me up. But desperate times call for desperate rhymes; my songs grew foul. Rather than get to work on how to secure a healthy sort of infamy, I put myself on a quest. I knew exactly where I was going: off to find the vaults. "This is happening."

Next thing I knew I was at a telephone mid sentence, mouth open. I forget how it began but it ended up at: “-and picture it all the way down there.”

It was, much to my chagrin, a fucking machine on the other end. I could tell by the niches in the voice; niches filled with oil.

It said: “The corner of fifth and fifth. Don’t call this number again.”

Then it hang up. I kept it held to my ear for a spell just to see if someone would jump in and help me out.

I hung up and threw myself from the booth. I felt heavy. Someone might mistake it for a swagger.

Then I was in front of a tall grey building. I swung around and saw signs that marked it as the corner of fifth and fifth. Like I was nodding off in the middle of a movie. Conspiracy filled what mind I could give shape to. Either I was just a tired *sumsum*, or someone was taking me for a ride.

I knew how to walk and open doors, still; I entered the building and acted like I knew where I was going.

People who know don’t know everything, and they’re not afraid to ask. I asked everyone I could where I should be going. They pointed me around corners left, right, but not centre; corners don’t do that.

Their faces were running together. I tried writing a song about it, but I kept it unborn cause it had to be in front of me to be worth anything. A man needs his secrets.

Otherwise he’s an ape.

Part II

Before I knew it I was standing before transparent doors that separated me from a warehouse floor.

I went in cause nobody was stopping me. There were racks as tall as I could figure.

Part III

The racks were filled with smooth grey boxes. They went on for as far as I could see. Everyone would have known what was in them. The ceiling went up until it couldn’t be distinguished from the supernatural mist that envelopes things at a distance. There were lights way up there. The floor was concrete.

I thought I saw movement, but death didn’t scare me.

I took apart one of the ones closest boxes to me just to make sure they weren’t leading a poor tired man on. It was like half a filing cabinet, filled with papers. There were no photocopies or pictures or charts; just notes as raw as what they detailed.

The truth hit me like a truck, but like a truck I don’t remember seeing where it came from, what it looked like, or who was driving.

The hospital I wound up in was the curb, elbows and knees connected, head buried in it.

I wasn't in any state to unravel anything. Despite my fatigue, I felt like I was onto something. What's more, I knew I wasn't thinking of anything. I was on auto pilot, and whether or not I was being controlled, I thank the peoples anyway cause they gave me an idea. The pilot was well trained and knew how to read my riddle'sh directions.

Dreaming up something big.

I hit all up on the nearest pharmacy and bought sleeping pills. More than two but less than five. As soon as they hit my pocket I unpocketed the thing and swallowed one or maybe two. Doesn't matter. I'm not dead. I wasn't scared of that.

I had to put myself into terminal fatigue to be sure I wasn't putting anything on record.

Paranoia or not, worst case scenario is I don't, didn't, *wherever*, give a shit about the time of day.

"But where are you going?"

There was nothing for them to pirate anymore. Unless they really wanted the song I was working on.

My fucking ugly song. I write it about them, and by the transitive property, *ummmmm*, I write it about me.

In my moment of absolute weakness I put pen to paper and tried to make something processed.

I fought against every instinct to keep it instinctual.

I scrambled to find a template to plug my ideas into. I couldn't remember anything I was taught in English. I remembered only vaguely the hero's journey and the story cycle. Obsession with the human condition shoved all our precious systems out of my head, and let's be honest, *my head's important*.

Ummmmmmmm.

I turned to something visual. I imagined it as a painting; I tried to invent paint again. I put it all up on a dyslexic canvas. It was like forcing poverty through a monster's vagina, the out way. My rough notes were drawn in the sand: charts, schematics, and floorplans. I don't know where I got the paper from but the pen came from my left breast pocket.

I wrote a story about a man buying some bread. And some money. And a boat. I blacked out for half of it. I finished it and hurled the pen to the ground, *black*, and then I'm at the post office. It was all packaged in a large manila envelope. The address was in my handwriting.

I was mailing it... *somewhere*. I was wearing someone else's shoes.

"This isn't my coat."

I clung to the systems that I recall tiring me. I was holding onto the shit that had us selling ourselves to a worse system. There was no way of buying myself back to I had to invent a new thing to sell to something better. And that's what life is. *Black*.

I was back in the warehouse. Someone was looking down the hall at me with concerned eyes. I praised myself in a fever: how lucky I was to be the first to find something better to sell myself to. It felt like a junkie's mania. I felt accomplished so I stopped wondering where I was going. I had gone somewhere. Good work.

What pity I had for the man invested heavy on the truth renaissance.

Upheaval was just about the easiest thing because there was no wrong way to do it.

What was I doing in the warehouse again?

I was back outside, writing "Look here" on a wall. I know what I was getting at. I must have had something else in store.

Drunk on the dream of sleep. I don't ever want to be sober again.

How long's it been? Have I started a revolution? What was I trying to do?

Trying to get ahold of my own infamy?

Guide my right to display my abuse in its myriad of forms?

My moment of clarity came just when I couldn't get a handle on it.

"This is just for you... those who feed my paranoia. You've never witnessed this story before..."

I was scrambling to know what I wrote.

But then I stopped. I was too scared to move, but just scared enough to pull myself together.

It was the paranoia that penetrated the fog I'd created. *Were they still watching me?*

It was – *must have been* – fear of death what had everyone scr-*scrambling* like me in my fog to document everything. Something was watching and something's coming after everyone.

It was fear of invisible eyes that had me shutting down. Maybe it was the grim spectre of death that guided the hand of this – *me* – faux revolutionary. Maybe.

If I was certain I would have thought it, and then someone might know.

But nobody would have checked.

Until something came after them.

It was all because of the police.

God bless.

Something's Wrong, Maybe

I was walking out of a bookstore in the mall and I saw a bottle of Coca Cola wedged between a railing and a wall. It was three quarters full so I started to drink it. I'm poor and I drink everything I can get my hands on. I drank urine once, probably. After about a minute I began feeling gravely ill. I'd never been poisoned before.

I stumbled forward and around a corner. I grabbed ahold of the first person I saw; a stocky Asian gentleman with red sunglasses. He was wearing a long suit jacket with the words "Striped Humongous" written above the left breast pocket.

"I feel sick motherfucker! What's going on?!"

"You dying, man," he replied.

I took a swing at his jaw, and he caught my fist in his huge palm – giant like an idiot's.

"What's it like to die?" he asked me. He released his grip on my hand, assuming a position of power.

"Why? Why? Are you some sort of idiot, like your hands?" I asked. If I had a thousand years of life, I would have told the entire world about how much I hated his hands and the unintelligence they represented.

"No, I'm unemployed," he explained, "and I'm pretty depressed."

I had begun to sweat and lose my posture. The movements of his pupils indicated that mine were dilated.

"That sucks, nerd ass. If that were me I'd probably kill myself."

He punched me in the stomach. It felt like two of the most expensive things in the world colliding in my gut. I quickly vomited up two litres of stomach acid and food and poison. The punch was so hard that, upon emptying out the contents of my tracts, I began spitting up piss and blood and my own sperm. I began spitting violently at the walls, unsure of how to react. He began talking to me, and for some reason, I was listening.

"The studio cut funding from the amusement park. They kept all the rides, but had to rename them. All the franchise stuff was taken out, and all the mascots were fired. I was one of the mascots."

"AAAAARRRGFUCKFUCKGRRRRRR," I replied.

The heroic Asian gentleman pulled out his wallet and showed me a card: "Unemployed Mascot Club."

As if possessed by the mannerisms of someone kinder, I scanned the card and looked back at him. Social etiquette dictated that he continue talking because, you know, that's why I was there.

"Do... *you* have a job?" he asked.

My eyes wandered toward the floor. There was a puddle of green at my feet; it might have been the poison, or what happens when urine and sperm meet stomach acid.

"Yeah... Yeah, I work as a sous chef..."

"Oh?... Are there any openings?" his tone grew into the sort of false graciousness that one usually hears over the telephone. I wasn't in any position to mince words; "Yeah, but you don't wanna do that. You don't wanna get into the... culinary industry, it's a bad scene."

"Why's that? I'm kind of desperate..."

And I'll tell you what I told him.

We live in the future, and the future is defined by either bitter bureaucracy, or the poetry of trivial things. The culinary industry – the most archaic, imperial industry in the entire world – has been enveloped by the real world and, as a result, it's not fun, or cool or useful. Much the same as fashion and music, it was ruined by science, which, ironically, is the only bold thing left. Like a tyrant turning kings into horses.

It all has to do with the Unhappy Piece.

A bunch of scientists – renegade, glorious, rockstar scientists – discovered that most food contains a stray atom called the Unhappy Piece. The easiest, and only, way to imagine it is to imagine an atom with a frowny – or angry – face on it. They didn't say how it was unique only to food, or any of its real properties, but at the end of the day, what doesn't kill you makes you suspicious.

All types, forms, and iterations of food has one of these atoms that is unique to that food, and they decreed that if one food touches another food, it runs the risk of colliding the angry atoms and then, well anything could happen. Any *conceivable scenario* could occur. The food could go sour or the food could explode or, most of the time, nothing would happen. Or it could turn into a baby.

Or it could turn into an alien. And you wouldn't know it was an alien; you'd just think it was a monster.

Regardless of the rarity of anything bad occurring, it made headlines in the daily *scary news* and fences had to be built and pillars erected and laws put to deal about theoretical, abstract cross contamination.

So if you're working in a kitchen, cheese can't touch chicken, unless the customer asks for it. All plates end up looking like platters, and if a leaf of lettuce falls into a container of shrimp, it's all gotta go.

Even the original head of lettuce. Sometimes even the containers in close proximity. Because that is what the future is like.

Big Hands looked as if he had heard of angry atoms, but not been made aware of the severity of the situation and how it affected his cheeseburgers.

"So don't get into food. You'll be pissed off every day. And you might be killed if you believe those handsome, *goddamn* scientists."

I spit out some piss like a cowboy.

"Wow, that sucks. But, still, I've got rent to pay and... you know, it doesn't sound that bad. All you have to do is make sure nothing falls onto anything else and make it so customers assemble their own plates. It kind of makes it easier for you, doesn't it?"

"Oh really? How about *this*-!"

I threw a roundhouse kick towards his midriff. He caught my ankle with both of his huge, ridiculous hands and threw it back at me. I corrected myself and continued.

"It has nothing to do with easy. It has to do with obsession and control and the mutation of sensible institutions into paranoid, fluffy pieces of *bitch*!"

"It's just a job, man. Just get the money and go!"

"You were a fucking mascot! All you had to do was jerk off all day!"

"Do you know what a mascot is?!"

"I don't know anything anymore! My whole world's been flipped on its head! My head! *I am flipped on my head*!"

I attempted to stand on my head, as I had forgotten that my body was abnormally bottom-heavy. I struggled to offset my weight, and upon failing, returned to a natural standing position. Big Hands did not seem concerned that I had appeared to rub my scalp on the floor for a minute and a half.

I pointed at him like I was his dad: "Stay unemployed! You're out of the thing. Stay with your friends, in that club. That fucking club. *This is the future!* We are living in the future! Nobody gets fired because nobody wants to work! I have friends! All my friends are employed and we hate each other! You're living life! Be poor or something!"

I attempted to thrust my thumb into his eye socket, but he blocked it with his forearm. A thick tattoo ran up his arm that read "These days."

Unimpression glazed from his cheeks up to the start of his hairline.

"You don't know what it's like..."

"I dropped some lettuce on a tomato and I almost got cut in half with a bukkake sword! Figure that one out, genius!"

He paused, looking through me to the glorious things behind me. The past – the never was.

"You don't understand," he said slowly, "I'm a supervolcano..."

"Hold on now..."

He began to move more calmly – *measured*, you know – like he was hijacked by something important.

"I'm one with the reality of doom. There's thirty ways everyone in the world, and everything they've ever accomplished, can be destroyed tomorrow. Or the next day. I haven't worked the numbers."

"Is this what they talk about in the Unemployed Mascots Club?"

I was engineering the next assault in the back of my mind.

"People need... I need, you do too, we need the bureaucracy. We need the little things cause little things are enriched by big, gloomy things. And you're stuck in the gloomiest thing of all. And that's good."

He was in love with the fact that I was trying to strike him down.

"So get me a job in a kitchen so I can be like you."

"You don't know what it's like. Fuck you. You can't convince me I'm happy. And you can't convince me that you're special."

"Can you taste it?"

"Um...UMMMMMMM..."

"You see something in me. You can taste everything about to come down. You are reacting accordingly – your friends are doing what they feel is right – and, on a wide scale, so is everyone. Everyone's acting like they're about to be shut up. Are you getting louder?"

"Louder?"

"I meant to say louder."

"That's fucked up."

"I bet you're writing a lot more down now, and recording everything a lot more. Cause you can taste death coming and you want to be remembered."

"I don't know when you turned into a messiah," I said, "but it doesn't suit you. This is rehearsed."

"So what if it is?"

"I didn't expect you to agree with me..."

"Do you feel weird, seeing someone become someone else?"

"Is that why you dressed up like a cartoon character?"

"Maybe. Are you trying to get in my head now?"

"Yeah, like a big, stupid, asshole costume." I knew what he was trying to say, and who he represented, but not exactly.

"I'm just doing what's expected of me," I told him.

"That's cool. Without that, we'd be animals."

"You are to life what savagery is to this system."

"That sounds rehearsed." He sounded pleased with himself, that he could connect the dots back to me.

"You're not splitting the atom for me, perplexing Asian gentleman. Nothing in the universe has not already been considered by me, nor anyone else."

Pregnant pause.

"I need a job or I'm going to die."

"I'll do it, because you saved my life. Supervolcano."

I got him a job working with me and we got into a lot of trouble. Together, we bought into subconscious social adaptation. When we nodded at each other, we glimpsed onto the other side and saw the end of the world, and the brutality of truth. It sobered our minds when we got fed up with inferior people making demands.

He dressed up like a giant rabbit sometimes.

It was no character I'd ever heard of or seen before.

Butcher's Tie

I remember the day tattoos stopped being cool

The whole thing happened over *there*: Christmas. November 20 through Dec. 24.

The previous decade hadn't been kind to we few with low income.

That very same past decade saw the literal expulsion of checks and balances holding the holiday season back.

Christmas was out of control and nobody screamed "*shut it down!*"

But we were poor and we had other things to think about all through November and even – *even* – through the first half of December where we wondered aloud if it was still November.

Now let me tell you about my father.

He looked like a dad cause he looked like Santa cause life is cyclical.

One night, when I was so young, he called me into the living room by the tree.

Little things that he did would later blow the façade out, like how he had this nasty habit of flicking his upper arm as if he was preparing to put a needle in. In my cynical teens I would remark about how it looked like Santa Clause was about to shoot up with heroin. Then one day being a teenager stopped being cool.

I must have asked him what he was doing there.

He chuckled to himself. It all worked.

"I don't ...toys... everyone. M'of ... *parents* ... them the toys."

I must have asked him what he meant. Maybe he paused.

"Well," he continued, "I'll tell ya. See, I mean ...to a lot of *people*. But ... can't ...and get it all done. Nobody ... *that*, child."

I objected. As a child it only mattered what everyone else said.

"Well, *grownups* ... because ... *important*."

Why *why why*, daddy?

"Well, like I ... I mean something ...everyone. But'n ... *perfect*."

I must have hung my head; beaten down. It was reality painted like an animal.

"Hey," he whispered reassuringly, "... someone isn't perfect doesn't ... can't work ... him that way."

Maybe I said something. Maybe I didn't.

He turned his mouth up like a slanted line. I remember that much.

"You know, if enough people ... make *great things*. But ...come from a good *place*."

I don't know if I looked up at him or what, but from what I'm told, I asked "can you even fly?"

And he said "of course I can. I just can't fly fast enough."

The day tattoos stopped being cool:

No longer content to buy absent-minded presents for those special people in their lives, *they* stopped *shopping* and started *questing*.

Most domestic stores fell ditchdeep.

The thing that happened was people started travelling around the world to find presents worth their sweat comma love comma worth.

What signaled the approach of the season was the migration out of every Halved World nation. Symptoms included empty streets and scary nights. Those who remained in these lands of plenty were insane or desperate.

All those who remained were butchers or meat.

The onset of cold allowed things – not of flesh, not of this dimension- to creep up on you.

On December the third my friends already had creative voicemail messages.

On the off chance you wanted to feel a sinking feeling, you could always call 911 and hear a recording explaining lack of service; a string of words and numbers that don't even mean anything.

And I *wanted* that sinking feeling so I called them and by that evening I was good and low.

Halfway through the floor I reminded myself that my friends had left me all alone with the cold and the murderers. My second family, the *purser* iteration, went the way of the prototype. They were making me turn to god.

So I started talking to myself.

I started getting angry. Swallowing venom.

"If you get out of this," I told the carpet, "you're gonna sing a different tune."

So that night of the third, when I pulled the blinds up with nonmeasured mania and I saw someone across the street chewing on an arm, I had nobody to talk me down from doing something epic. Neither families nor god were there.

I kicked open the front door with a bucket of water in my arms. I walked-with-a-purpose over to the guy and threw the water right in his bald, dirty, fat, mangy head.

Now I have something to say about the law.

This didn't start way back then when Christmas started taking hostages, but it was close enough to get *we few* piquing eyebrows.

They many criticized us, as they rightly should have. Our paranoia came from an insecure place.

The thing was *prisons*.

Rehabilitation fell out of public favour, and in its place they planted supreme revenge.

Judges whom I had never seen, yet will defend rights *not* to be seen, decided that putting them in a different, darker world wasn't enough- that world they'd created with the properties of a black hole, sucking in anything that got within existing distance.

They arrived to this decision upon a crest of bloody prison riots to bury it in.

So what they went ahead and did was establish an intricate system wherein criminals had everything in their life ruined upon conviction. A highly personalized system where all they loved was stripped from them by the state.

Family fortunes would be seized, relatives relocated, names blacklisted, reputations tarnished, and all property destroyed. Lives would be ruined.

In essence, any criminal within the family would curse the family. And then the law would change to the hands to the family – the *peoples*.

The transference of responsibility was wildly disregarded.

Nobody said the judges had more pressing matters, but that was a possible defense.

Back to the scat

The water hit his face like a big flat foot.

He dropped the arm and it didn't even make a sound. There was a fever in his eyes that went parabolic.

I told him "I'm making a citizen's arrest."

Bold step in my direction.

I hesitated, but then didn't.

Brokenly, "I'm... making a *citizen's arrest*, sir!" but he wouldn't stop.

"Wagon..." I said, chocolatey with woe.

Then I darted back inside like a smarty pants. He gave chase and it went downhill the further I got up the stairs.

We both burst into the apartment, myself like a maniac and himself like a lunatic. He was breathing sharply through his teeth.

It was his confidence that let the crowbar connect with his forehead. That's as close as I can figure.

I keep weapons within panic distance because I'm a cynic at heart.

He hit the ground like a sack of swimming pools.

I didn't take a break between the defense, justifiable by informed linguists, and the capture, justifiable by the police's miscarriage of justice.

I bound his legs and arms with whatever I could find. When he awoke I closed the closet in his face, promising "trapdoor time you *nerd!*"

I kept him in there a week until 911 was back up and that *baowshit* about "condition five" was quietly swept under the rug what looks like a tent.

They came and hauled the bitter, malnourished son-of-a-bitch off. No questions were asked; what happens in December disappears in December.

Or so they promised- the *citizens*. Nobody with any warm blood coursing through their veins could promise that. It was common commentary; something that united we few with *them many*.

So when they took him off I thought it was curtains close on the whole thing.
There I am, washing my hands.

Days later, while I was at work constructing presents with mine bare, washed hands, I received a phone call. It was the police calling to let me know that this fine democracy wasn't done with me.

An example was to be made. Or so they didn't *say*, per se.

Now let me tell you about what lies to the East.

This is a really short story using pretty much the same words as the last one: revenge, loyalty, and wicked sniggerin'.

The world's judges got up to something. Our guys worked hard to have us be allowed to pursue sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll in foreign lands. The guys on our side defended the Christmas migration and pleaded that host countries allow us out little comforts. The other side agreed, but only if it was a 2 way street. And then we agreed. Everyone was agreeing.

The alarmingly buried law had people carrying the laws of their native countries with their passports. It worked for anyone and everyone. It was the closest thing to peace.

Our guys didn't know that everyone everywhere else hated us and that handshake came with half an obituary and a giggle.

Most of the countries were bitter about our folk clawing at their treasures like unexorcized orphans.

Judges holed up in Egypt, fed up with all of us doing our thing, legalized murder from November through December.

On the surface this would sound like a simple, *just* technique to disappear the tourists. Nobody really caused a fuss.

And then after word got out, other countries followed suit, and then any chance of reprimand was destroyed.

So let me tell you about my brother.

My brother was one of the many who hungered for the *dark*, and one of the few actually approached by tall, leath'ry silhouettes to be employed as a glorified puppet. But what a glorious puppet he was.

He trafficked passports from countries of legalized murder and decriminalized taxidermy for those 2 months when it counted to miserable criminals.

So that's why when I see someone outside my house chewing on an arm, part of me knows he's got the paperwork, but another part of me is ballsy.

My balls; my just, principled, brilliant balls.

And that brings us back to me stepping into the court.

I had invited my brother to sit in attendance so I could gesture something rude to him as I walked past. I'd called him days before promising a cake or he wouldn't have come. All he got was my *most offensive fingers*.

But he couldn't walk out. Then he'd be weird. So he had to sit there and *deal with it*.

Something wonderful hit my face. I saw the judge.

It was Santa Clause.

He was like a pillar of glorious nuclear smoke.

And it only exploded for *this guy*, and as such it was all over me. I had atomic bomb painted all up and down my suit. I was dripping with the reality of this guy.

But the whole thing was a circus anyway so how I acted didn't really matter.

The more I talked to myself the more horrified I was at the visions of Father Christmas handing down words that may lead to damning, the ruining of innocent lives, the punishing of uninvolved persons, or war on Egypt. Or all of them.

War on Belgium.

War on Christmas, sir.

The case would blow the holiday fiasco wide open.

My brother had smuggled himself into the town inside a crate three sizes too small, and upon arriving I had him smuggle in a cell phone three sizes too big so he could record the thing.

The accused never broke eye contact with the side of my head.

My lawyer was appointed to me by the state, but it might as well have been a mannequin. It wasn't about words. It was enough that this thing was happening.

I looked back at my brother periodically to give him reassuring man-nods. He crept the camera up over peoples' shoulders every now and again. Every time he did it he went coughed decisively. Like a sicko.

I'd forgotten my father until that day in the courtroom. That night kept running through my head in a loop that tilted the passage of time.

The judge hurled toy trains at whomever he deemed unfit. Despite the media's portrayal of the thing, Mr. Clause was in charge and he wasn't in town to give a hand out.

Unless the hand out was justice.

We were waist deep in the thing when a dusty Egyptian man kicked his way into the courtroom with machine guns strapped to his body. His eyes were fixed ahead but not on anything in particular. If he believed in what he was doing he would have just showed up with a bomb.

While I was hateful of the Egyptian Government's unquenchable bloodlust, I was thankful for their lack of conviction. I gave my brother another stern man nod. Gave Santa one too.

He nodded back. Everyone else was freaking out.

The militant took charge of the place by waving the guns wildly at eye level. As per usual *ad nauseum en mobb* his demands were uncertain. He fired haphazardly into the air to unsilence his non demands.

Thankfully people began to duck down and pray so I had time to compose my thoughts. While everyone collapsed into hostage-mode, a mode sketched deep into the collective unconscious, I remained where I was. I carried myself like I knew what I was doing. I was ignored.

The first thought I had was: there's one person in this room who wants murder.

"And it's not the gun wielding militant."

I jerked my head rightways as if someone did it to *kill* me. The criminal was coming at me with his fingers like meathooks.

In my peripheral vision I saw Santa's ghostly frame leap onto the podium table.

I did the same; I hopped up on top of the table before me just as the cannibal made a grab. His whole bit reeked metabolic.

I began stomping and kicking at his hands. He swaggered hard, waving to and fro like a boxer, and me kicking like a child throwing a tantrum. He swung with his entire body weight on his hands.

I ran to the back of the room, leaping onto the pews what shielded the hostages from the gunman. I jumped from one to the other like a master platformer, making my way to the back of the room, with the cannibal in pursuit. With the half of my brain not fixated on my survival – the half reserved for breasts and complaining – I noticed a calendar snapshot of Santa Clause dressed in Judge's garbage leaping onto an Egyptian Militant like a pro wrestler.

Then I quickly thought of breasts.

Then I didn't.

Without breaking speed or rhythm I made my way to the fight and kicked the terrorist in the spine. The weight of the Father came crashing down on him.

And then, *alarum*; from the other side of the room- it was my brother!

"Hey jerkfuck! *Catch!*"

He pitched the cell phone at me with the majesty of a swan's neck. I caught the thing with my left hand like everything was going according to plan. With that same swooshing momentum I smashed it onto the maniac's face. His head snapped back, so I hit him again, and again, and again. He collapsed to the ground, twisting and convulsing. I straddled his bloated belly and raised the thing high in the air.

"It's for you, you *piece of bitch!*" and cracked it on his forehead again.

When I rose to my feet it was all over. All the necessary people had done their part.

Santa Clause released his deathgrip from the terrorist's neck. We shared another stern man-nod as the rest of the court composed themselves.

After the police came the crowd began to file out. Myself and the judge shared a word, far removed from the tension of post-traumatic stress. We spoke as if it was all part of the same plan.

"You could end all of this," I told him.

He guffawed politely and looked upwards.

"I don't run the world, you know. None of us do. Noone *does*."

"I know what all of you do. Everyone knows about the passports, and the laws and the hatred..

People disappear while everyone else is *globetrotting*. And... and it doesn't have to *be* that way!

You guys are the--"

"*I know*, I know. Listen, just..."

He put a hand upon my shoulder. It was more reassuring than it should have been.

"You're preaching to the choir here, son."

I hung my head low and fixed my eyes to the floor.

"I don't get it," I told him.

He patted my shoulder .

"I speak for the people. Like it or *not*, this is what they want."

He paused to let me deal with it, patted my shoulder again and started to walk away. I turned to catch him before he was too far-gone.

"People *want* a change though! That's what this whole thing was about!"

He stopped and held position. He was thinking. He turned back.

"People..." he started, "People are well *enough* with this sickness. They just need medicine every once in awhile."

He smiled as if he'd just told a joke.

"If they wanted change bad enough they'd do it themselves!"

And then he melted into the crowd.

Under my breath I cursed him because it was so small. He knew exactly what he was saying, without having said it before.

My brother would soon later sever his connections to the criminal underworld having nearly been killed by the government he was supposed to be assisting.

The cannibal didn't die. He was deported to Egypt because the paperwork said so. Upon returning he was crucified then hung by the neck until dead.

The judges over there were clever in their own right. Everyone felt good about themselves with all parties revenged and the story concluded.

Christmas Eve came shortly after court, carried on the fingertips of the feel good story of the year.

The nation had given itself a present.

The only thing that changed was me.

But I'm a pretty big deal.

That's why my friends love their presents made out of popsicle sticks.

Nothing's cool over here.

The Dice People of Streetsville

"I got a powerful appetite for some money food."

"If you give me half of that, I can get half of some food books."

"But what's in it for me?"

"UT-!"

So there's a bunch of creatures made out of huge dice, like a bunch of big boxes arranged in the form of a personoid. They don't have any facial features, or hair or clothes or anything; just big dice people.

There's five of them crouched in a circle on a sidewalk, gambling with pairs of tiny fleshy hands, gesturing over a pile of pulsating electrical orbs. The sidewalk was the closest thing they would have to soil in Streetsville, so, in lieu of a forest or a waterfall or something, it was the best place to gamble.

All of the players, save for one, have cut marks and wedges chopped out of the ends of their arms as makeshift hands. The odd one out fumbles for a large blade stashed at its backside. It clasps it between both of its stumpy dice appendages and drives the handle into the ground. It raises one of its arms and drops it hard down on the blade, cutting a weird chunk out, like a thumb in the wrong place. The game continues on as if nothing was occurring.

By all rights nothing was occurring. The thing was just trying to cut itself some hands to gamble with.

That's the scene.

Streetsville was a city dAMN literally made out of streets. Roads and avenues and lanes completely covered the terrain, curving into the sky at extreme right angles, connecting with other streets to form skyscrapers, houses, and complexes. It was as if a conventional city was painted asphalt, and then the asphalt was painted with arbitrary lines like hedge maze government. That's what I'm trying to tell you.

The dice character who was carving up its hands finished up and rejoined the circle of friends.

"Ey Lynch, getcha hands did," one of them said.

"My name's Lynch and I've got some hands," replied Fever.

"I th-th-think it's time you put some real m-m-money down," suggested a different one.

Lynch shuffled his arms up and down, and then shook them like an ironic dance.

"I'm here to buy back my soul," said Lynch.

"Hurrrrrrrr."

"Go get youserf some more money food and exchange that shit."

"I can't do that. The market's changing. Nobody wants money food. All they want is food books. And nobody wants to sell me money food cause I have no money."

"Get youserf some money. Get some like juice money."

"It doesn't work like that. The economy's no good. I'm in the trenches right now. I don't have anything."

One of the dice guys tosses the hands over to Lynch. He picks them up and looks at them with his no face.

"Get money," one of them says. It might have been anyone.

He rolled the hands to start his own economy.

The Halloween Doctrine

"These are violent times for valentines, childd."

- *Spiderjaw Slagg*

This is a story about tall tales and hatred.

Men wiser than myself use science instead of women; always have. They're not around anymore. They were suicide bombed into extinction.

Way over there in xxx8, they used science instead of women to figure some important things out. Things second and third were: bitches ain't shit, and god bless the dead.

The first was serious business.

A science representative participated in an interview with The Riddler Times after decades of radio silence.

He said, in layman's favourite tongue, that the hands of god were connected to a sphere and *inside the sphere* there was a tonic of fear and hatred.

Nobody knew what that meant; after they said it they disappeared.

Back into the labs.

There was a haste running through the veins of his letters and it generated a murmuring discord beneath the public psyche.

Facefirst into the grave.

Here's something...

The West and East were populated by 2 uncontested species, respectively, during the *real* beginning of this narrative. We jump ahead. Watch this:

In the West they had trees in line like pillars stretching back past the vanishing point. They were all tall and generously girth'd. There must have been billions of them there. The space between them was barely enough to fit a palm. *Nigh palmwide.*

There was a vague government- *so vague*- and there was a hierarchy that made sense if you were there. The centre of the country yielded the oldest and wisest and loudest of all the trees. Along the right-coasts and most anything that bordered a body of water stood the soldiers who could die for anything. Their bark was flaky and stupid. Save for that...

They were all nearly identical; *carnivorous*, gnarled mouths, eyes shielded by thick sunglasses, and every so often one of the branches was an arm. The formation of the arms was the wedge what separated them, like the trivial science of old. That wedge afforded them names. The sunglasses made them forget the names. The songs they wrote made them remember whatever they could imagine.

This spectrum was what kept them occupied when deflating from military. And they were always busy with their military. As Marcus TreeDoom said, "We're up to something."

And here's what's up with the East: it was covered with with *mad skeleton men*. They didn't build structures as much as they piled upon eachother. *Ants.*

They walked around with bombs in their chests and had a *thing* against trees. It all stemmed from the soil labelled "power struggle." And...

They had no culture beyond forgetting why they wanted everything dead. They told tall tales to justify why they were napalming entire civilizations with their tumbling frames. They drew archaic designs on their bones with each conquest. They didn't like nothin'.

There was a war that had them possessed from the moment they could form ideas. All they wanted to do was consume, their jaws oblivion, and their teeth an opaque, cleansing fire. They had an especially tall tale for the tree people across the ocean. They let time expand their wounds and exploit what faults lay in their faith, plural.

And another thing...

The West was constructed in the image of Kamladis, the Greek God of Circles. And over there, *whistling through the jungle*, was their entertainment; an entertainment what drove a wedge between the scientists. This grand revelation came days before their sudden eradication.

The bad half stepped back while the ugly half gravitated towards it.

The ugly half, the *last* half to evaporate in the wake of all-encompassing suicide bombings, extracted a very puzzling result upon the crest of *years of research*. They said that every living thing had a threshold of hatred. They said that there was a certain amount of cells – *a sphere* – that had to be filled with hateful satisfaction, otherwise it would shrivel up and destroy the waking mind. Some people gluttonized theirs and required more. Some people starved theirs and needed less. But they can't kill their stomach and they can't kill the hate.

In times of antiquity, the famous tree people told more and taller tales. They were unaware, plural, at the time, but this was how they filled their furious cells.

Their tales rode on a thick, syrupy current of tragedy. Their characters were oft betrayed, sold out, murdered, and suffered. When revenge was had it was glorious revenge. These were *principally* cautionary tales. They *principally* kept their negativity above starvation. Their humour was black and their endings were like a sewer.

When they shifted away from taller tales they changed their medium: Instead of fiction, they indulged in decidedly *non-fiction*. Members of their own community were exploited.

Weaknesses were ripped into and downward spirals observed with rapt surgery. Removing the fiction, strangely, fulfilled them more. Like switching from oils to bread.

They hoisted up their own people to sit upon chairs of celebrity. Semicolon infamy. They were showered with accolades. They were praised with showers. They were rained praise upon. And in the same breath as a reinforcement, there came a vicious claw that grabbed and tore at them. It came from the mouths of everyone. The accolades were withdrawn and whatever condition that made them unique was magnified until it enveloped them completely.

Then they disappeared.

It unparched them.

So here it is...

The hunger for hatred had fruition'd into something abstract. The stories grew tired and lives can be only *just so* unique. *Just so* had them fashioning a revolving door of grandiose scope, but they got sick of it with the same sickness that gave them life.

They didn't commit this to paper, but they didn't have to.

They didn't like paper.

So with the same cellular hunger that had them betraying their own people, they turned their branches Easterly and shouted.

There were strange things over there.

There were demons over there. Nobody could fathom them. Who in their right mind would?

Want to fathom them?

Their history was recorded only in the foggiest, so they were once again able to invent. They were savages. They ate at their own people. If hypocrisy was detected, their flaws were overdrawn as something only an *infernal creature* was capable of. Immaturity to the point of self destruction.

We drink, but they drink more, and who could drink that much?
Only a *maniac*, for certain.

There were treacherous whales what eavesdropped on the trees, mumbled reports to each other, and sending it all the way to the opposite coast. Uncontested, they owned the sea between the opposing societies, like owning the sky and space above terrain where nothing lived. Their imagination soared something like twenty four seven. They had big ideas; if they were in the sky and space, the land above that must have been heaven. They wanted to go to heaven sans the death. This they spoke of only to each other.

Regardless of their mystery, they were employed by the tree people as soldiers; when war was to arrive, they were outfitted with artillery. That Submarinist Rumour Channel was responsible for most of the ill feelings on both sides, neither giving much credence to the agenda of the two way street.

At around the same hour, the mad skeleton men had become painfully aware of those trees in the Ouest. Tall tales from that sort of origin had made their way over, and they were forced to ponder rumours of the tree peoples' decadent sort of hatred. The hatred what took the shape of celebration drove them into a mania. They abandoned the smouldering wreckages of surrounding worlds and gathered their forces. They amassed *en mobbly* and constructed a crucible from which plans could be extracted. Kings made it sound like dinner time. *Something had to be done about this fucking vegetation.*

The last great tree celebrity went by the title of Bliss Crashtonne. He was elected an idol on the grounds that he came from a *broken house*. They loved the breasts out of it. But his kind never lasted very long in the public eye, and before long they were done. Just as astonishingly as it came.

They chewed him up and let him drip from their jaws to let him know they wanted nothing to do with him.

So just like that he was rolled on back to the farthest coast, away from the front lines, into a colony of their past obsessions. It was the special place for old celebrities. All the trees faced east, across the Pacific Ocean, so he was carried to the back end. Over their heads, thousands of miles.

He had been aware of the place just like everyone else.

When he got to the back of the line, there was no sort of anything back there.

All he witnessed was a war torn shore with a dread hanging low.

He didn't remember much concerning the frenzy of his downfall, but he remembered the word "*colony*." And while he couldn't define it, *really*, he had a good idea what it meant.

And here's what I have to say about Bliss Crashtonne, *and suit*.

His celebrity was predicted by his friends due to the familiarity of it. While his broken house got the sympathy vote, the population was strangely predictable, and they wanted insaniacs. Every popular surname prior to him had *seen things* they couldn't account for. One might even say they were *haunted*.

He, like them, was *haunted* by visions what crept from beyond the grave. They came at him like flashbacks, rather than in his dreams. They'd taunted him like clawed fingers for ten and one

half years. He never came forward with his revelations because those afflicted by any sort of *bad dementia* were to be shipped off to the Shore of Shame. Had he known that he would end up there anyway he would have quested to be a revolutionary. But nobody ever told him shit.

More than his desire to be famous was his desire to avoid expulsion, and so he let them run their cold extremities down his personage. Let them buy him things. Let them speculate. He never wanted in but he was finding things to block his exit. Chairs. Lamps. *Galleon bits*. They loved him because he appeared to merely *flirt* with his condition. He juggled the dementia in the air with coyness and sparkly pool balls. He could have been *faking* it. He could be doing something ironic. For all they knew. But they didn't want to know. They wanted to love him. Crazies – the ones overcome by the sights until they turned ugly - were to be shunted into whatever hell could mesh with their compassion, but he could carry a conversation and showboat, so he was an *oddity*.

And, believe it, there were many others afflicted by the dementia. Like aids, it could be said that everyone had it to some degree. Some released their hands from the floodgates. Others reinforced them with whatever vice they could get their awkward branches on. Depending on how they were raised.

There were enough horror stories in the media to warrant *th' fear* being put over everyone. They drew a line, but they got as close to it as they could. Like the circle that governed their existence, the vice became their careful observation of those beautifully sick.

There was a controversial study conducted wherein *a bunch of secret stuff was done*. The long and the short of it was that the crazies shared the *exact same* hallucinations. The closest thing to a Man of Science was a Tree of Witchcraft, but they both would have said the same thing: "There's a connection here, *gov*."

They prodded the connection with long witch fingers and announced that the illusions were caused by a toxin in the air. There was a mist that hung low on certain regions – narrow to the trained eye – with a mere fistful of citizens being affected. It wasn't a real mist, but if people were to look had enough, they could see it. This lent to the idea that some areas were *ghettos of dementia*. Some said it was merely the comfort of being around their infected brethren, and it spread out like a fist turning into seven palms. But nobody listened to some. And this isn't a story about the architecture of madness comfort circles.

The public loved to watch their elected famous trees squirm, and they loved (even more!) to hear what they had to say. Everything was projected through a lens of what they could never / refused to understand.

Bliss Crashtonne cited stories about zombies turning levers more than twice their size. The second most common story was of headless women being shoved into a rocket and shot into space.

They repeated *ad nauseum*.
"Swallow it, sonn."

So he was there on the shore with a trunk full of madness. It was silent for as far as it was. There were cliffs and hills chopped off, jagged rocks just beyond the driftwood. It was like a deserted island. The last tree from his parent society was far behind him. All alone. Oddly enough. Despite the news coverage to the contrary. It wasn't long before the waters several hundred yards from the shore were parted by the business end of a submarine. It came out of nowhere; it was polished out of antiquity, but just

barely. His roots trembled the sort of shake which trumpets the figuring of *something out*. But he didn't know what. Somewhere far off, dots were being connected. Killers. Serial kidnappers. Aliens. Nefarious fascists. Who uses submarines? Where is everyone? Serial Nazis.

The submarine got as close as the sandbar would let it. Saltwater perspired off its hull. Bliss just stood there. It was sunny and the rocks were being baked enough to bake on. Everything seemed to be happening so perfectly that he just had to see the thing through. From the submarine leapt men, and he knew they were men cause he saw them in his head. He owed them his fame... but...!

They trudged through the water all the way up to his earshot. He let them come. They were dressed in medical blue except for lab coats. There was something supernaturally pale about them, and regunaturally grim. It doesn't matter how many there were. Regardless, there was still one of him. They moved in formation with furrowed brows. They stood before him in the shape of a crescent moon. One third of them brandished long rifles which they aimed squarely on his face. The only one to speak said "motherfucker you're comin' with us." Their pupils were dilated, their palms dusty. They all slapped those dusty hands upon his bark with a loud clap and dug their nails deep. They then hoisted him high in the air and carried him into the submarine. Their knees broke the water apart. The friction didn't phase them. Nothing was touching them. They stuffed him through a hatch at the top. They submerged and left. As astonishingly as they came.

PART III

The East was governed *only abstractly* by a round table of kings. Nobody else wanted to know the history of the conflicts that kept them moving; the kings cracked the books and told them why. They were the first to look Westward because they'd always had it in their peripheral vision.

Their hoards were growing restless. The ashes of their nemeses had barely settled and already they were up and snarling for more. Mumbblings from within the palace had lead to rumours of the devils to the West getting a lot deviler.

These guys, who the hell do they think they are? They betray their own people. They bathe in glamour. These were not *things*. They were... *men*.

The Centrefolds of the Tree population kept eyes trained to the East so strongly that they never faced away from it. And they were talking, too, and when they spoke, they didn't mumble. They yelled everything. *All the time*. Even the preliminary assumptions. Even the second guessing and the doubling back. They made everyone as confused as they were. They drew the public in so close they couldn't see the whole thing, lo, the hole they were filling.

Those skeleton peoples in the East were growing restless. They'd eliminated everyone around them and they were getting ready for a full scale assault on their fine democracy, *whatever that meant*.

They'd seen it before, "I don't mind tellin' ya!"

They kidnapped Bliss down *nigh of the fathom* where the jellyfish practiced supreme authority. Their moaning punctured the steel in select places, squished against mechanical grinding and, like, *groaning*. They went deeper and deeper. The vessel compressed from all angles and everyone had to *deal with it*.

The salt content was skyrocketing somewhere above 119%.

The strange men brought him before their supreme master. They dumped him down on some wheels and guided him through winding corridors. The submarine was deceptive, affording Bliss enough space to stand at attention. Nobody spoke, but they sure as shoot worked. It was all there: large levers and *not as large* men. No rockets; he was sure they'd be introduced later.

"I'm going to die down here," he thought to himself. He repeated it aloud, but nobody replied.

Deep inside the cramped submarine there was a room, and therein laid a tangled web of pipes. And therein laid a restless spirit. It shook and rattled the pipework from the inside.

"HuuuuuuuuOOooohhhHUUUUUooooOOOh!" it spooked.

Bliss shuddered at the thought of anything down there being real, but with promptness he quivered:

"What's going on?"

It was only Bliss and the pipes down there.

The mess collected all its scattered consonants into a booming alpha male voice.

"We are scientists you piece of nig!"

He trailed off with a sorry "I..."

The pipenet shrugged off some bits of slime; "You are going to witness it! Only you can speak in that *fucking tree language*! I want the last piece of literature in that *fucking tongue* to tell this tale!"

"I'm--"

"Are you literate, *son of a bitch!*...?"

"I- Yes, I am, but this all seems--"

"Witness!"

A tremor ran all up the pipes and then, just like that, one of the walls folded up and away.

He must have triggered it. He thought.

What was hidden behind the wall thrust into reality with the assistance of carefully arranged lights.

It was a piece of paper – a schematic. It was supported by a poor man's pedestal.

Bliss fixed his eyes on the thing and searched his mind for a cipher.

The lines slowly came together, and the labels jumped out at him. But before he could exclaim his success, the pipe boss spoke:

"It's a war machine! *HAHAHAHAHAHA!*"

The paper detailed a design for an oblique machine. Certain labels cited lasers and steam vents. There was a nightmare about it. Bliss began to invent connections and formulate the most eloquent ways to test them. Trial and error cushioned by doves.

"Are you the ones... who gave me the nightmares, then?" Bliss was still studying the piece of paper.

"Your intellectual fetishes have lead us to *success*, sir!"

"So... yes?"

"*You should be writing this down!*"

Bliss started scratching a twig against his branch, mimicking the actions of transcribing.

"Okay... continue?"

Slime shot towards the ground. Grime loosened. Some steam shot out, but he wasn't sure from where.

"*We are the scientists!* We are a glorious race of men that were driven into the ocean by the terrorism of the land dwellers! The tree people were the ones who usurped our kingdom! For decades we watched the politics unfold from our *watery prison*. Those *same trees* enveloped

their inherited hateful faith and *perverted* it even further. And then they began to alienate their own kind for their own amusement. *Are you getting this?!*"

"Of course. Yes. Yes, *pipes*, I am writing this down." His time was divided between the design and the plot.

"We had not the ability to take your kind due to the congestion and nationalism. You were too strong, child! *And you still are!* But, once you became segregated, we could cull you as fuel for our fantastic war machine! We could use the wood of your god damned famous bodies to give the heat necessary to burn the diamonds to work our lasers!"

Bliss stopped. Everything was moving so fast as to submerge his emotions. His reactions were purely in theory.

"And... okay, explain the war machine? I'm getting the thought that I missed a big chunk here--"

"*We will take back our country!* We will retake our rightful place as lords of this world! We will declare war with our magnificent death machine, and we will win! Everywhere will be our house!"

Bliss continued writing with nothing on nothing. He was overcome with panic and he began missing some key points. He sort of wanted to get out of there as soon as possible. More than that, he wanted out of the room.

"Okay. Good. And, followup to nothing you said, what's up with you being pipes? Just... if you're ready."

"We are all dead you *piece of shits!* I'm *deader* than the rest of them! I'm a *ghost* and I'm haunting this nonsensical tangle of pipes! But *I'm the fucking boss!* Do you understand! I'm the *fucking boss!* I'm the *fucking boss* you *fucker!*"

"Okay. There's a thing. And... anything else?"

"For now! *I hate everything!*"

Underwater life drove the dead men a little bit mad; a condition flirted by their affection towards submarines and steam. The divisions what once parted the duelling ideologies collapsed, colliding the halves into one fine fuck.

That one half that laid out the science for celebrity watched their festish'd opera unfold on the new society. Every two hours a gangly periscope would break the surface. They loved it. The other half just got to work on the weapons.

They were always about the dirty work, but much of their paperwork ended up about people, divided from the celebrity science by a feeble chainlink fence. At the end of the day, both of their best laid plans concerned people. The militaristic side was governed by the pipebastard, a once great general who was blown to pieces by a bomb filled with acid. He sequestered himself into the most criminal of their warships, with the leaders of peoples science sitting in loftier cabinets, clapping and giggling in ginger delight. The pipebastard hated them, and would have killed them if he were able.

He wasn't able to do anything.

It made him the craziest of them all.

It all came to a head at around the same time.

Up there with the landstanders, a war was erupting. The bosses of both sides had traced the politics over and over, and perhaps a mutual delusion as reached. Both had to go.

The mad skeleton men were steady launching themselves across the ocean with contact detonators. They sailed through the air, propelled by the momentum inherent in *the most powerful catapults in the world*. The trees were prepared, attaching artillery to whales and sending them their way. They took up arms with the trees due to their incredible weaponry. More than half of them disappeared into the sea with technology in tow. Those that remained

to keep up appearances shot the dead men as they approached the coast, and whatever soldiers actually approached the opposite continent shelled whatever was in range.

Behind the trees, deep in another ocean, the scientists were finishing. While their plot was being massaged, they lifted their fantastic war machine above the water line and let it stare down whatever was kind of even close.

It was a giant metallic sphere with stiff tentacles hanging heavy from its waist.

Inside its hallowed corridors, zombies of science paced back and forth, readying for D-Day.

Bliss was still in council of the pipe boss.

"You *know*, the terrorists are over there in their continent. I bet if you guys just talked to my government, we could get something going. And, you know, *if not*, there's still other land masses with nobody there. You could... start over?"

"*We hate the fucking trees! We made you bastards! We gave you confidence, and you swept over the ruins while we were recovering! You stole our woman! And all you did was live and fuck! Your reign will be collected and put in our pockets like so many dollars and cents!*"

"Are you all this furious-"

"Yes! *We're dead!*"

Those manic depressive scientists skulking around the periscopes, glued to the events transpiring, divided their time between the war and the double-crossing care of the *damned whales*.

Where before there was a cautious song, now there was laughter and victorious cheering. They radioed down to the pipebastard and informed him that the whales were armed and dangerous.

He was pissed off.

"I hate those whales more than everything!"

Bliss had become strangely calm having not been murdered for fuel, or eaten for funs. He tried to keep his captors talking to cement his usefulness, *at least*.

"So... the whales have switched sides... then?"

"The whales made their own side! *They're on my turf and I'm going to kill all of them!* They want the land too! I reckon!"

"Hey, you know... *hey*... don't be like that."

"We have insane weapons that can turn them *inside out* and turn *water* into *piss*! Once we take back what is ours we'll turn our warheads into the sea and purge them in a maelstrom of *blood* and *hilarious brains*!"

"I mean... whatever you think is best. By the way, thanks for not murdering me. I... I love writing. Or something."

"You've done some good work here! *Deal with it!*"

It took one day for the war machine to be fully operational. It might as well have been a minute in *war time*. After that, they took control of time. They took control of everything.

They began the attack at the first heatshift of afternoon. It blasted the terrain with pillars of fire and pollution. The trees took stock of the attack, but before they could reassign their forces to combat it, one tenth of the landscape was already lost. Ashes and dust uncurled into the air. From space it looked like a vengeance flag.

As was the case with the levers and cranks which they operated, their eyes were bigger than their bodies.

The land was lit high with flames, and through the flames stepped battalions of ghosts. Zombies wielding scythes cut down what scattered teams managed to avoid the onslaught. Before long everything was stripped.

From the other side of the country came skeleton men what detonated upon striking anything. They gradually beat down the grandiose shields of wood. The catapults adjusted their target and moved inward. The whales had disappeared once they got bored.

It took one and one half weeks to dissolve the structure of the tree regime.

The scientists' war machine hovered across the land, stomping any resistance, with soldiers stalking below. Their shoulders hung low like rapists.

Once they reached the opposite shore they battled with the mad skeletons until their presence was completely destroyed. Nothing could damage their giant death sphere. Eventually their barrage stopped, and the Kings had no safe haven to cross the sea to. They retreated back into the desert to read.

What trees remained were motionless – playing dead.

Clusters of them were silent with compliance. They let their mouths grow over and closed their eyes tight.

The zombies raised their weapons high and shouted. The war was won and they were alive again.

The Pipe Boss of the Zombie Scientists submerged for the last time, allowing his disciples to carry on without him.

"This country's no place for a mess of pipes," he said. "I'm going to go after those treacherous whales."

And he did just that.

Their war matured but never shed its skin.

Bliss Crashtonne - their scribe- was planted in the ground and allowed to live as grand record keeper of their fall and rise. They kept him as living proof, telling their tale to whoever could ask the right questions. Questions like: "What the hell?" and "Have you is?"

He was to be revered and protected under their secret, underground system. Their system as one that their children could never understand. No tale was tall enough to do their fury justice, so it's just as well.

Bliss Crashtonne is the oldest tree in the world and he knows exactly what happened.

"You can check out but you can never leave."

The Dollar of Mythology (An Essay on my Work Purity)

"All my friends are inventors."
- *Spiderjaw Slagg*

I was granted one wish, and it was that I was in a position where I could destroy the world.

I was on the phone with Hell, and they wanted to know where their money was.
I told them I was taking it and running.
And we laughed for a bit. They're probably laughing still.

But then- *really* -I told them, calmly – like smooth brick – that the cheque was in the mail.
There were three voices on the phone; they had the lines possessed. We had the technology to bottleneck them, and it made them anxious.
Conversations with the representatives of Hell are tense, like treatment.

Hell needs to talk to someone, and that someone is always me; I signed my life away to the Prime Al Dente years ago, meaning that I don't get to drink liquor or sleep in a bed.
Both sides – the Ministry of Hell, and the Empire of Mankind – need me to arrange deals in the sales of technology and weaponry. Hell depends on us to give them inventions to make their work more efficient.

I befriended just about one of them, as he was more like a dog than a collapsing star.
As a young person I was absorbed by the fear that I was not conducting myself like I thought I was. While listening to music, I might be pumping my fists or dancing around, but not realize it. The crucible of the fear was that I didn't know anything and everyone was secretly laughing at me.

I was afraid that my clothes were imaginary, and that I was walking around naked. In these paranoid flights of fantasy, everyone in the world was paid off to ignore me and play along. Sometimes people looked at me strangely, which was just the medicine it needed to combat reality.

What I needed was a different vantage from which I could look upon reality.
And I found it in a demon whom I had sold the schematics for an earthquake gun to.
I named him the Naked Truth, and he assured me that it was all in my head, and that "you're a paltry nigger."

Much like the vibrations of newspapers, I felt something ripple in my guts.
I was becoming dependant on their world and those within it.
I returned to paranoia with new eyes, looking for familiar sanctuary in different places.

I've converted to nihilism, and in the process, given myself a new project. They told me that what I referred to as nihilism was simply disgust coupled with alienation. Regardless, using all my knowledge and experience, I made an alien, disgusted plan to spread my bitterness throughout all of space.

The key that unlocked it was the key that unlocked everything: resonance.
And vibrations.

I'd gotten my idea from *news vibrations*.

It's what happens to newspapers when they're left on the ground for too long. It doesn't work with books or magazines or brochures, usually. Newsprint only works. And tissue paper, but there's never anything good on that.

Newspapers, when left on the ground, slip through fault lines in the ground, or any incline or weakness, *or if left long enough*, completely phase through the concrete and the soil and the dirt and the shit. It doesn't matter if it's as thick as the dawn of creation.

They say that the flimsy medium was literally vibrating from the knowledge written on it, giving it the properties of resonating waves.

Agents of Hell will tell you that the End of Days is responsible for gravity becoming schizophrenic.

Moments later they will credit themselves for the End of Days, and the agenda weakens their credibility.

There's a Suicide Cult living beneath underground, and coupled with Death and Diistruction (sic,) they worship news vibrations. They think it's a message from god, and due to their depth, they believe we legion are god. They hate god, though, so the respect comes with really bitter words.

Really bitter fucking shit.

So with newsprint of all sorts meandering towards the centre of the Earth, and enigmatic Death Cults intercepting them and misinterpreting the (mad) (sic) science behind it, the stage would be impossible'd to be not set for something big.

I was something big.

Using schematics I had committed to memory for lack of anything else, and harnessing the near endless connections at my fingertips, I created a supreme poison.

The poison was simple looking – deep purple – and in such a quantity that it could be kept in a single vile.

It's nature was such that once it struck something, it would spread like a metaphysical plane blanketing reality. It would soak all things in corruption and hatred.

I would be the god that the (sic) Deathh Cult were wishing for.

By the transitive property, I came to this place by nature and news.

The Naked Truth was the one who told me that nihilism isn't the complicated hate that I was experiencing.

He laughed for 20 minutes, coughing and spitting up pieces.

He continued, telling me that I was hateful towards systems, and the grandiose goal was my way of trying to find a new one. To serve some sort of untouchable.

I asked him if it could be Satan.

He said no; Satan was an antithesis. Satan is crippled, and weak, and grey and sick.

Satan lays upon a filthy stone and screams at everything.

He said he could see a piece of Satan in me, but in that same breath, the same could be said about anyone.

He said that he could not see god in me because god is not from a place of sight.

He proposed, boldly, that I was trying to ruin everything to get closer to god.

I told him there was only truth in sickness, so Satan works but dreams and aspirations don't.

He didn't understand, and I told him that neither did I.

He asked me to spare Dragons.

I told him no.

He asked if the potion had been field tested.
What the fuck was I supposed to say?
I took it to the streets.

I tried calling up the Naked Truth to ask him about New Zealand, and some of the things we'd talked about before.

One topic he had brought up the last time we met was that expectations were high in the land of the living. He told me that when he was a stupid idiot gentleman, it was customary for people to create their masterworks late in life, and to spend much of their time prior in studies and preparation.

He was an antique soul, like everyone else I know.

He told me that all people do nowadays – the way we do things – is absorb and ascend. He claimed that people are desperate and quick, and that it lends to reckless recycling.

He told me that we were fucking everything up.

"Where's your fucking sonata, Naked Truth?"

"They buried it with me!"

"Fat lot of good all that studying did you for."

"Fat! Yes! Fat's the word I would have used."

I told him that everyone's smarter than how they used to be, and with that knowledge comes fear, and paranoia and knowledge of one's own mortality. And insignificance.

And if you knew how quickly you were gonna die, you'd wanna cash in.

He told me that there were more diseases in his day.

I told him that "there are more superweapons where I'm standing."

He didn't shut up. He was screaming into his own hand.

Victory is ugly, like a silly ho.

I found a man sitting on the curb, folding pieces of paper in an opened briefcase. He looked like an old soul.

"Drink this," I told him, offering him the vile of poison.

"Absolutely!" he shouted. He grabbed it from my hand and swallowed the contents. I think he might have been insane.

It took a few moments for the poison to take effect. Prior to the effects taking hold, he stared at me with a crazy person's smile. I concentrated on everything in my peripheral vision.

Once the chemicals took effect, a blank expression fell down his face.

"How do you feel? *Ya feel weird?*"

"I don't know... I can't think of anything..." I examined his skull with my eye pieces.

"What do you know about New Zealand?"

His mouth hung open like a dummy.

"You don't know *shit* about new Zealand."

Part I

My mind was racing as I left him on the side of the road without a thought in his head. He was staring off into a parallel dimension.

The elixir I had created killed ideas and creativity; suffocated thoughts and the systems that govern invention. It turned rational peoples into robot headed weirdos. I had given all I had to him, but I had the power to make more. I had the resources to drown the world in the stuff because it didn't take more than numbers and garbage.

The subject didn't tell me that he felt weird. He couldn't feel anything. You could read it around him; he knew what it was to go on, but didn't know what it had to do with him, or what it meant, or what to do about it. He was muscle memory man. His presence spoke volumes.

So he was weird; as weird as the devil.
I put it in my pocket for later.

Part II

My experiment pointed me to the town of Noodle, New Zealand. I was tracing a line all about waves and transmissions.

The system that the Naked Truth was expressing dissatisfaction about was being held in place by this machine. It broadcast a signal that made everyone feel desperate, and feverish and crazy and scared. It was a transmission that drove people insane, and compelled them to make every minute count. It made everyone love life and want to live every day like it was their last. It turned gentlemen into scoundrels, and linguists into pianists.

It was a weird machine, and I never endorsed it.

Someone might bring it up in a conversation; "Fuck that shit," I might say, in this hypothetical world where people address me as a real person.

I'm putting it in my pocket for later.

Anyway.

The machine was fifteen metres after the last house in Noodle. The house was full of scorch marks and shadows burned onto the wall, like a nuclear bomb detonated a sliver of a dimension away.

I looked through the windows, stepping lively to field behind it that just about went on forever. It was beautiful like it had something to hide. I had two viles of the poison in my pocket, sitting alongside all the sentiments I was trying to avoid.

The machine itself was the size of a museum, enclosed in a smooth silver shell.

I was surveying all along – around - where it connected with the ground, looking for a door. He touched the tips of my fingers to the viles. My plan was to drop one of them into the heart of the machine and see if it was affected.

If the fluid backwardsed the machine, or killed the transmissions, it was the thing that would truly spell death for creation.

I was morally bound to confusion over the whole thing. I had written my idea on a napkin and left it in an alleyway, hoping it would find its way to the subterranean death cult. I was hoping they would appear with some advice, or the action would be the catalyst for some resolution. I didn't know what I wanted; all I had to do was write and drop.

I was seeking advice – *action* - from those who reviled me, and those like me, as god.

The machine building was a fully automated facility.

Long story short I dropped the vile into a sea of cogs and it got eaten up. Moments later all the machinery ground to a halt and it fell silent.

I started walking back the way I came. I looked back through the windows of the metaphysical nuclear blast house and noticed that all the scorch marks and shadows were gone.

Isn't that something?

"So, what's that? You created a poison that kills brain powers?"

"No, that doesn't make any sense. I don't think you were listening to me."

"You don't speak pimp."

"You must have been an awesome composer."

"I learned from the best. Have I told you that?"

"Yeah, but you don't speak bitch."

"It was god. I learned music from god."

“That’s pretty funny.”

It wasn’t the first time I had seen the machine, although the last time I was brought in by helicopter.

While the machine was located in the town of Noodle, it was owned by the United Nations. It was owned by the rest of the world. It was to keep people productive and focused.

I was one of the many people who protested the machine, because we believed that mind control wasn’t cool. We were young and naive; antique souls right about now.

Like the many I was with, we succeeded in blocking the mind control. We rationalized it and used sicko logic to penetrate it and go about life a different way.

And with numbers came strength, and we tried to destroy the thing.

Little did we know that we weren’t the first group to outsmart the signal.

When the United Nations got wind of our plan, they came at us like hot oil.

It was their policy that, upon finding those who could defeat the transmission, those persons were to be bought out. They would grant us each a wish – anything we desired – in exchange for information on how we beat them. Then they’d make it better. It was years prior; they flew us all into Noodle and met with us in person.

I sold out everyone in the world, but only for a moment.

Like the discomfort that we unravelled, I had to rationalize my way through a sickness that had been with me for as long as I could remember.

And it was a sickness that concerned not ambition, and not work or value, but of life and creation.

“You know,” Muhammad Ali said, “at the end of the day, with everyone striving to be the best, as fast as they can, and working to represent it as best they can, all the time... it’ll be good. It’ll work in everyone’s favour.”

“Do you think creation needs a creator, or just a cause?” I asked him.

“I think you’re... you’re onto a deep conversation there. I don’t wanna get into that.” He laughed at his own insignificance, and mine and everyone’s.

“You think we’re causes or consequences? You think anything we do matters? Or is music the same as a deadly, fiery fucking quasar?”

“What?”

I didn’t want his answer, really. I had made up my mind.

I had put in my request to becoming an extremely influential, powerful individual working within the system.

And I was about to get to the bottom of this creation business.

And that’s where this story started.

“What’re you gonna do now?” asked the Naked Truth.

“We’re prisms here. It’s nothing but different words for absolutes that might be looking back at us. So, since everything’s connected in a stupid way, I figured out what I can do to get back at existence-creation.”

“UT!”

By drinking the poison I lived forever in a chamber of absolute metaphysical control.

The Golden Door of Travesty

- "There's a door going on inside nobody is safe from."
- I bought an amateur submarine from a woman with tattoos all over her face.
- I just rented a truck to drive the submarine over to Lake Eerie. Going looking for a door.
- Pulled up to the shore and dumped it. Almost hit seven trees on the way. I can't explain it. Goodbye.
- Got the truck stuck in the sand. Got my foot stuck in the sand. Dropped my good pen into a lobster trap someone fashioned into some bullshit.
- Submarine's cramped and smells like weird jeans. Should have had a look before buying.
- Someone wrote "Skull Muerte" on the seat in lipstick. It's smeared like someone kissed it.
- I've never been in an amateur sub before. It creaks like old gears. Going under. Might get good reception. What?
- Trawling the bottom of the lake looking for a big golden door, using what looks to be a kerosene flashlight. Everything looks like piss or death.
- I tipped a waiter \$20 once. I have some good karma coming. I hope it comes soon. I can pilot this thing with one hand.
- I see the door. Gold and slime. There's nothing living down here.
- I pushed the door open with the front of the sub and went in. I was out of the submarine and could breathe.
- I was in an out of focus spot looking at one of my ex girlfriends. I think about her a lot and I guess that's what's up. I was looking at her but couldn't control my body
- I started choking and beating her. I couldn't stop and she was crying. She looked scared.
- I don't know how long it took but she died. Bloody and swollen. I was back in the submarine.
- I am missing two hours. The submarine was almost out of air. I didn't even check the canisters before going down.
- If I die on the way back home, tell people to read this, or tell them that the legend is true, but you shouldn't go in because you'll have to watch yourself kill someone you love, or have loved.
- By the way I saw a sasquatch on the way to the lake. Just an asshole sasquatch.

Triangle's Place

A Radioplay on Dani Compose

EPISODE 1: Everything You Could Ever Want

Cast

Narrator - RJ
Big Deal - Judas
Bones - Dimes

Synopsis

Bones and Big Deal are looking for a new pace to live. They attend an appointment with a real estate agent to purchase a condemned chemical factory. They are looking for treasure to bury like pirates. They used Wikipedia to track down the location of the Skull of Destiny, an ancient sceptre, hidden in one of the chemical vats. After purchasing the real estate they find Watercolour Kong and Triangle Thing. Triangle Thing was cursed to the factory after he popped all the balloons during a Christmas party. He informs them of the location of the Earl of Wealth and they bury it in the back like pirates. We learn this in Episode Two. This is Episode One. Bones wears tap shoes all the time and Big Deal drags a boombox around by a chain. The two dance through most of their lives.

Commercial Breaks

Daniel's Phish – "Fish with a P.H, fuck with a *fef*."
Internet Explorer – "You should use Internet Explorer. Free dial up modem?"
Video Games – "Video Games. Shut up and play some video games. Why aren't you?"
The Nation of Israel – "If you like spikes..."

EXT. Street outside of Abandoned Chemical Factory. Sounds: wind, cars, distant footsteps. BIG DEAL and BONES are looking at the factory, outside by the front gates.

NARRATOR

We join our gentlemen, Bones and Big Deal, waiting in a long deserted industrial district, standing before a derelict Chemical Plant, browned beneath the light of early afternoon. Bones' tapshoes make eager sounds while the chain held in Big Deal's hand grinds nervously.

BIG DEAL

This is the last time we jog it. Jog it!

BONES

This means we can get the drop on him. He's expecting us for 4:00. If we show up at 3:50 we can tackle the situation from the 40 yard line.

BIG DEAL

Sports.

BONES

Shoulderpads.

BIG DEAL

I'm still nervous about... even being *around* a real estate agent.

BONES

Yeah probably.

BIG DEAL

I bought a house once and when I moved in it turned out it was underwater from... from the beginning.

BONES

That's pretty funny, but I'm gonna need you to get over it cause you need to do most of the talking.

BIG DEAL

(alarmed)

What? Are you fucking kidding me?

BONES

No, what? I thought I told you. I can't talk. I have a parasite. What?

BIG DEAL

(frantically)

You can't tell me that you didn't know! I know you knew because I told you about it every day!
I've sent you e-mails and voice mails –

BONES
Fe-males!

BIG DEAL
I...

BONES
Women...

BIG DEAL
...You know all about this!

BONES
If you listen to me for just a minute, you'll understand why you never told me.

BIG DEAL
You can't talk me out of the truth!

BONES
OHMYGOD BECKA! That's for the cuntflash! I have a parasite. It's a kaibosh.

BIG DEAL
You can't do this, this isn't fair.

BONES
I'm doing it right now. Get over it.

BIG DEAL
(sternly)
Don't... fucking put this in my lap! This is a total slap in the face!

BONES
(blankly)
I don't care.

BIG DEAL
If you're putting me in this, you need to help me. I don't know anything about this. *At all.* You found it and set it up so you-you have to tell me what you had planned.

BONES
I wrestled a *food* for this head.

BIG DEAL
(frantically)
I feel like I'm suffocating...!

BONES

Okay, look here. This whole meeting... it's not about *lying*, so you don't need to worry about you being a jerk, like you're a son of a bitch. Do you understand?

BIG DEAL
Y...es...?

BONES
We're gonna be telling the truth. We just need to *sell him* the truth. *Hya* dig?

BIG DEAL
None of those words made sense to me.

BONES
What we're gonna do- you *know* what we're after. We've talked about this. You tell me what we want and I'll tell you how I'd say it. And you just remember it. It's word association, and even idiots can do it.

BIG DEAL
Okay, fucking... *okay*. It's... we want this chemical factory cause it's abandoned. It's for a good price cause it's condemned. We'll have the neighbourhood to ourselves cause we're...

BONES
Bohemians.

BIG DEAL
And there's no sick people or crazy people cause it's the middle of nowhere.

BONES
Right, so... it's far removed from the... I'm gonna say *stress* of the city, and we like that. And it's the only lot in *this size* that fits out budget. *Saturday morning; coming up it*.

BIG DEAL
Okay... *then*... we found this place cause we read on Wikipedia that there is treasure in it.

BONES
Bohemians.

BIG DEAL
And we want treasure cause we're treasure hunters. We want to get it and bury it like pirates cause that's what we do.

BONES
Now, see... we don't need to bring that up. But if the conversation ends up there, then we can... like... retard sound... tell them we fell in love with the history of the building. We like the architecture of an abandoned chemical plant. Cause we do.

BIG DEAL
And then what? How would you tie all this together?

BONES
If you're ever in doubt, throw out a thick peal of laughter. Like you're better than everything.

BIG DEAL
I don't know how to laugh.

BONES
It's like coughing with your teeth.

INT. Abandoned Chemical Factory. Sound Effects: Tapshoes, chain sounds (empty room echo.)

NARRATOR
Our gentlemen entered the abandoned factory to attend their meeting. They wait in the wet, filthy front lobby. Big Deal crouches down to the boombox attached to the other end of the chain and places a cassette tape in.

BONES
Get ready; I don't want to have to say it again.

BIG DEAL
I'm going to punch my head through a wall if... I don't even know. I'm not thinking straight.

BONES
I was talking about the musix.

BIG DEAL
What music?

BONES
Here he comes. Don't do it.

BIG DEAL
MISTER... *GRENADIER!* We're your four o'clock.

BONES
Don't do it.

The REAL ESTATE AGENT growls. There's a loud farting noise and he begins shouting and screaming. He proceeds to vomit while screaming in agony. His hollering becomes unhinged and manic.

BIG DEAL
(enthusiastically)
We'll *take* it!

BONES
PRESS PLAY WHAT!

BONES presses the "play" button on the boombox. A hip-hop beat begins to play. BONES' tap shoes go wild.

Short transitional piano break.

NARRATOR

Our gentlemen, having purchased their new home, explore the grounds to find out what mysteries are contained within.

BONES

This place. This place is driving me crazy.

BIG DEAL

Should we check the vats now? Or you wanna... look around a bit, or...?

BONES

Why can't we do both?

BIG DEAL

That's... okay.

BONES

Fucking *dick*.

NARRATOR

The gentlemen approach a long hallway with doors located on either side.

BONES

This long hallway's giving me the *whiskies*.

BIG DEAL

You can take that to the bank!

BONES

What? Shut up. Open the door.

Loud creaking sound effect.

NARRATOR

Pushed against the far wall was a large, surreal machine. Disturbed dust hung in the air, interrupting the column of light that threatened to expose it all.

BONES

Muoy picante!

BONES

That's one hell of a piece of nothing.

BIG DEAL

I could destroy it with my laser vision.

BONES

Yeah, well, I got news for ya, you can't do that cause that's impossible.

BIG DEAL

Yeah well you can take it to the bank

BONES

What is that, what, is that your new catchphrase or something?

BIG DEAL

You got one. You got "clean yourself up."

BONES

That's cause you never wash your ass or face.

BIG DEAL

Oh my... god... Becca.

BONES

You piece of shit.

BIG DEAL

Let's just get back to work.

BONES

No, you get back to work. You go figure out what that machine is.

BIG DEAL

It looks like a dead weather controlling machine. I bet all the money I have that that's what it is.
What would a dead weather machine be doing in here? I just answered my own question.

BONES

Stop trying to be funny. Clean yourself up.

BIG DEAL

AW RATS!

BONES

You figure out how to make that god damned machine into something and we can have it work
for us. Get us to live forever.

BIG DEAL

No. That's not how the weather works.

BONES

Let's get out of here. It's getting in my head. I bet you all my money we'll find a mummy in the
next room anyway.

BIG DEAL

Stop gambling all your worldly possessions! Nobody could ever make good on that claim!

NARRATOR

The gentlemen exit the Broken Weather Machine Room and continue down the hall. Bones tapdances alongside Big Deal, who drags the boombox playing modern rhythms. The encounter an oddly shaped wrench when...

BIG DEAL

Okay, I got one for ya; every door here is locked and guy didn't give us any keys.

BONES

I guess... he wanted us to... kick down every single door.

BIG DEAL

These are metal doors, asshole! There aren't enough kicks in the world to make that happen!

BONES

We'll figure something out. And quit trying to usurp me. You're the straight man.

BIG DEAL

Once we find the treasure I'm gonna snap you in half.

BONES

There's not enough god in the world to make that happen. You can't fill these shoes.

NARRATOR

They came to a large gymnasium filled with soiled beds. Long pipes and pieces of vents hung from the ceiling from chains.

BONES

I don't like the new and exciting basketball science.

BIG DEAL

Maybe it's why this place closed.

BONES

What, basketball?

BIG DEAL

No, not basketball. I'm not talking about basketball.

BONES

Oh...

Pregnant pause.

BONES

Could you start-

BIG DEAL

LaBraun James.

BONES

There's something in the middle of the place. The *court*.

Footsteps.

BIG DEAL

It's a... suit. You're talking about a suit.

BONES

What's written on the back, there?

BIG DEAL

It says... "Fuck baby."

BONES

Not a moment too soon.

BIG DEAL

It's fucking... I feel lumps is what I'm trying to...

BONES

LaBraun James over here doesn't know what's going on.

BIG DEAL

Are you talking to me?

BONES

What's that?

BIG DEAL

What's in it?

BONES

It's a... *Shaq Fu* Sega Genesis cartridge.

BIG DEAL

What's the phrase for this? Is this Pathetic Fallacy?

BONES

This is too perfect not to be anything. There's a theme here.

BIG DEAL

I feel like I'm becoming haunted.

BONES

Go clean yourself up!

BIG DEAL

AW RATS!

NARRATOR

They made haste from the gymnasium, as there was much ground to cover. They soon found themselves in a vast, open floorspace, punctured by dozens upon dozens of massive chemical vats. The music bounces between the slimy walls, all the way to the other end, obscured as it was by dust and debris.

BONES

And here I was second guessing that this place was a chemical factory, or that we were lost in someone's dream.

BIG DEAL

Thanks, captain words. *Ahem.*

BONES

This is what we came for, destiny. In one of these vats is the treasure. According to the Wikipedia entry, which I have committed to memory by method of loathsome whimsy, it will be underneath the picture of a dolphin.

BIG DEAL

Be careful, cause it could be a shitty picture. It might not even look like a dolphin. It could look like a fucking vulva.

BONES

Do you know what a dolphin looks like?

BIG DEAL

I know what a vagina looks like.

BONES

I think that you think a vagina looks like a dolphin.

Long, awkward, suspicious pause.

NARRATOR

With the scene of the wealth having been found, BIG DEAL and BONES begin searching the interiors of the emptied vats, scouring every inch for the picture of a dolphin.

BONES

There's no fucking dolphin in here. I think we've been taken for a ride by the internet.

BIG DEAL

What number are we at?

BONES

Seven. Out of *five.* Figure *that* out, genius.

BIG DEAL

What do we do if there's nothing in here? Like, no treasure.

BONES

Well then we wouldn't be here. This whole scenario wouldn't exist, so I don't see how that even exists in the realm of reason. BAAAAAAAARF.

BIG DEAL

Hold on, is that a dolphin? Over there on the ground?

BONES

It is. I'm gonna go press my palm to it. And by the way stop trying to be cool and clean yourself up.

BIG DEAL

AW RATS!

Shuffling sound effect. Hand slapping against stone.

BONES

This is so stupid.

NARRATOR

With shovels in hand they chipped away at the concrete until they drove the tips into a hard wooden shell.

BIG DEAL

We've struck wood!

BONES

Get it out of there. I'm sick of this fucking dolphin job.

Lifting and laborious grunting sounds.

BIG DEAL

Open it up!

BONES

I'm opening it up! *I'm opening it up!*

Wooden creaking sound effect.

BIG DEAL

There's so much gold in here. And there's so many jewels. A lot of people must have died to get all this treasure.

BONES

Yeah and they'll *stay* dead! Let's take this out back and bury it!

BIG DEAL

idiotic laughing

NARRATOR

The gentlemen chiselled away the remaining concrete and carted the chest to the back of the factory. They dug a deep hole and placed it gingerly in the ground, laughing all the while.

BONES

Ha ha ha! Fucking- fucking dead- *this is bullshit!*

BIG DEAL

I'm so angry! *I'm so fucking angry!*

BONES

(crazed)

HA HA HA it's in the hole! It's in the hole!

BIG DEAL

(giddy and demented)

The treasure's in the hole!

BONES

(angry; echo)

Bury the treasure! *Bury the fucking treasure!*

NARRATOR

They proceeded to shovel the dirt back into the hole, sealing the treasure in the Earth's crust once and for all. They wiped the sweat from their brows and drove their shovels into the dirt with a triumphant snarl.

BONES

Looks like this mystery is solved.

BIG DEAL

To think, in a moment of weakness, we doubted the existence of the dolphin.

BONES

I never did. I never doubt anything.

BIG DEAL

What do we do now?

BONES

What we do now is we guard the treasure. We live here and we buy guns. We need to clean everything paranormal out of here, or we need to harness its energy.

BIG DEAL

Do you think we'll find any friends in this polluted asylum?

BONES

I'd gamble everything in the world.

Pitch for "Batman Begins 3"

Based on a pitch submitted to firstshowing.net by DCompose.

Here's how it goes. This is my idea. There will be no questions.

The 2 villains in this one are The Riddler and Catwoman.

Do you mind if I smoke? I'm going to be smoking all the time.

It takes place between 3-7 years after Dark Knight. I don't care how long it takes.

So in the third – the movie, we're talking about - one Edward Nigma is a genius working with apes in a secret zoo run by Wayne Enterprises, funded by the government through Stark Industries. And I know what you're thinking: money. I was thinking the same thing when I thought of it. And I have an answer: yes. If we can't get Samuel Jackson for Nick Fury I think we should go with Wanda Sykes. If I know audiences as well as I know I do, they'll eat this shit up. By the way the lab should be underground like in Resident Evil: The Motion Picture, but that one came to me in a dream.

By the way, for the rest of this pitch I'm going to be putting cigarettes out on my tongue.

One night while working late- *alone* - trying to crack a faggot genome, a test ape bites Nigma on the collarbone and he gets a mutant strain of AIDS that causes him to speak in the form of a question, all the time. His voice will go up at end of every sentence as a reflex.

"I want some lemonaaaaade?"

WHOA.

He becomes obsessed with question marks because, as a child, his father beat him with giant question marks. It's important that we establish a traumatic childhood, as early as the opening credits.

Maybe his mother was addicted to AIDS and she was never around. So-so-so he's angry at the world – everyone understands this. He thinks he's smarter than everybody. He's pissed off all the time and hates everyone. He sends a one-page letter to the Joker wherein he says the word "cock" seventy five times, each time with a frowny face in place of the 'o'. Or maybe he uses two o's and draws nipples in them. I'm no writer; you can hire guys to do that shit.

The first half of the letter is a crude drawing of Robin getting shot in the dick with *another dick*. I don't know how far your cameras can close in on images, but we need to see this as big as you can, as crisp as you can. The drawing should be shot in IMAX.

Nobody knows what to make of the drawing because Robin doesn't exist in this franchise.

Someone should wink at the camera at this point. It doesn't matter who. The Joker should be played by Tilda Swinton by the way.

On the other side of the city, Selina Kyle(Catwoman) is raped by a black drug dealer she was trying to buy some cats from. She got confused and turned around and might be an idiot. The drug dealer should have a tattoo on the side of his face that says "AIDS." AIDS should be the theme of this movie, and there will be allusions peppered throughout the film about how AIDS is actually heroin. Selina works at a library and wishes she was a man. There should be an IMAX scene where she puts a stapler up to her crotch. In fact, all penis-related scenes should be shot in the largest format possible. Anyway, she decides to dress like a cat so she can buy guns from her blind-yet-audibly-sensitive arms dealer (Doc Samson or some crap) so she can go kill the guy who raped her. She shoots him in the ass so much he explodes. She decides that she can kill

more people robbing banks. She becomes entranced by the criminal lifestyle. Every villain should have been beat up sometime in the past, and I think everyone in this room agrees with me.

I love smoking cigarettes. I know this guy knows what I'm talking about!

The Riddler and Catwoman run into each other while robbing a bank or a pharmacy or some butt gas. Catwoman sucks Riddler's dick. Just a fucking fucking HUGE IMAX dick. He makes her bleed (makes her stupider?) Batman shows up, and before he can catch them, he is shot in the face by "Riddle Gas," which is a green fog that makes you question your own fallacies. Batman falls into a fever and wonders why he only has white friends. This is the first scene with Batman in it.

Alfred should have a girlfriend, too. She should be played by Katie Holmes and have no dialogue. She should look like she is lost and troubled in every scene, like she wandered onto the set. Someone should wink at the audience in every scene that she's in. All the winking can be done by one guy. He can be the guy who made AIDS heroin. I'm no writer, so you guys can figure that part out. Get someone like Jeremy Irons, cause this guy's gonna be all over the movie.

Harvey Two-Face comes back as a ghost to haunt Bruce Wayne. While investigating an incident at his ape research lab he discovers the identity of the Riddler and sets out to murder him for being "a pimp faced jew." Bruce Wayne is Jewish by the way.

The Riddler impregnates Catwoman with his long, bony fingers, explaining it as the "ultimate riddle." She gets really sad.

The Riddler disappears into the sewers before Batman can get to him. When he arrives at his "Riddle Lair," located on "Mystery Island," he finds the Catwoman who was looking for money. He throws her through a marble column and blames the ghost of Harvey Dent.

Again, I'm no writer, and you probably got guys who do this for you, but I was thinking that it could turn out that Bruce Wayne is a paranoid schizophrenic and he killed his parents. We can also tie this in with a subplot where Bruce Wayne has been in a coma for the past 2 films. He should wake up with AIDS.

The movie should end as the No Man's Land arc is beginning. Nobody dies. A few people will end up in the hospital though.

The movie should include, in no particular order:

Three scenes where the Joker makes light of Gordon's moustache. Real talk.

A scene where Fox introduces "Bat Stilts," but he is the only one to use them, and he is smoking five cigars at once while doing it.

Two scenes where Batman falls down to the sound of a slide whistle.

Sonic the Hedgehog Ruined my Life

A Video Game Article

The first console I ever owned was a Sega Genesis, and the game that came bundled with it was the original Sonic the Hedgehog. As I wrapped my peanut butter sucking fingers around the cartridge, a spell draped over me and, to this day, has yet to lift. I ran outside and curb stomped a shrunken man.

Had I followed him I might have gone on a journey. "I just don't give a fuck," I might have said. "Poop," I probably said. All that existed was Sonic the Hedgehog and Service Games. I don't think I'm alone on this.

Sonic let me smash robots with my ass. I put my finger into the corpse of a dead raccoon. I ran around and collected rings. I shoved a mentally handicapped child into a parked car. I beat the boss and freed the animals. I sat in the oven until I pissed my pants.

I was a part of that world. I lived the dream every day. Sonic the Hedgehog made me a sex offender.

Mario never had the attitude that Sonic had. I need to talk about Mario.

I'm going to talk about Mario for a minute.

Nothing tore children apart like corporate feuds, and in truth, it happens everyday to people of every age regardless of the life they walk.

I remember that one of my friends liked Mario; I took his starchiest shirt and broke it in half over my knee. If it were a girl I would try to get them pregnant. I didn't know exactly what sex entailed at the time so I would just throw birds at them, howling "*Enlarge!*"

And I don't think I'm alone in this.

Sega took Sonic into the world of the third dimension (the stupidest dimension) and introduced characters like the president's daughter (*ho-oh!*) and a synth-era white Sonic. And they wanted you to play as all of them, and fish and look for treasure. The game started colliding with the comic, which was like THX-1138 held against Jurassic Park.

I played Sonic Adventure in a toy store and threw up over my corduroy shirt. Act 1. I took it off and hurled it at a stroller. I punched and shook the metal pillars containing the gaming system. I beat my chest like an ape with my bloody, throbbing fists. I felt something spill from my mouth that felt like wet clay. During gameplay I kept falling into the ocean and before long I was standing in the toy store all bloody and without a shirt on. People asked me to stop and I spit weird goo at them. I let my hair go wild. When a child approached me and inquired as to what I was doing, I made a lewd and suggestive comment. I was tackled to the ground and beaten with sticks. I went to jail.

I don't think I'm alone on this one.

There was nothing fast about *this new Sonic*. It took the worst part of Mario and combined it with the lamest part of epilepsy. Whenever Sonic talked, I felt like an asshole for listening. I felt like I had been hoodwinked, although with no intentions given, like in the survival-thriller movie Cube 2: Hypercube. Knuckles went from new-and-exciting *hip hop* to the wildly inferior *rap*.

Act 2. When I got out of jail I decided to wait patiently for the next Sonic game. I laid low in a trainyard. I scavenged for fibre in the morning and got attacked by dogs in the evening. I developed a callous body able to withstand most of the elements except for fire and maybe space. My friends said I lost an eye, but I don't believe them. I entered their bizarre world in my dream, but everytime I was immersed in a civil war. Every franchise that exists is a constant civil war; you are but war profiteers. I am a soldier. Every night I thrust a bayonette into the heart of a fat rapist robot king with a huge moustache; Dr. Eggman before they trimmed his figure down. Every night I spilled the blood in a fictitious corporate cartoon world, and everyday I awoke in a pool of blood with bite marks all over my body.¹⁷ I could tell the difference between canine teeth and human teeth. I refused to pay it any mind.

They claimed than when I returned I was feral and inhuman, unable to recognize them or communicate. They said they taught me the ways of civilized man again, but my friends are gay.

With the next couple of iterations from the franchise, I started to see *right through* Sega's facade, like a robe that dissolved in fast motion. When I played one of the subsequent copies, I felt the ol' oil rise up in my guts again. I was back in the old toy store. They didn't recognize me when I walked in. Act 3.

I started punching a wall. My old wounds opened. My dry, hard skin split and angry juice dripped out. They reopened is what was going on.

I was squinting so hard my brain began to haemorrhage. Knuckles and the slutty bat went looking for treasure. I kicked a baby in the ass. Sega bored a hole into my head as a child, and then at the dawn of the new millennium, they began pouring piss and spit into it. They built a piss-Christ installation beside my Adam's apple. One time they sneezed but diarrhoea came out. They just stood there and laughed.

They wanted more story than gameplay. They wanted the world but wanted to do inappropriate things to get it.

When someone's kid came to ask if he could play, I sneered like an ox and scratched my balls vigorously. I took my shirt off cause I was convinced it was turning into maggots.

An obese man came barrelling into the video game section. My eyes narrowed at the challenge. "I'm a rapist! I'm going to rape fuck you!" he screamed.

Boss battle. I ground my teeth so rightly together my gums began to bleed. I careened towards him as if I were running across a hockey rink. His hands were grabbing at the air like it was a pair of breasts I couldn't see. I dove forward and connected my shoulder to his testicles. He screamed in agony and stomped on my back.

"I'm gonna fuck your booty like an Angus burger," he growled. Children and parents alike created a circle around us; a combat pit. I rose to my feet and wrapped my crusty fingers around his moustache. "Let my people go!"

I ripped his head towards me and planted my other fist into his nose. He staggered backwards, blood pouring from the point of impact, cursing into his hands.

"Score one for the woodland creatures!" I screamed at him. He fell backwards into a rack of lightsabres. Someone tackled me to the floor.

My life is ruined. Why are there power ballads in this thing? Why are there huans and political intrigue?

¹⁷ "Make 'em stop!" – Joker Grasshopper.

The baby I kicked in the ass was the president's baby. They took me to jail and threw away the key. They told me they had a second key but they had to look for it.

Sonic the Hedgehog fucked me up. Sonic the Hedgehog is fucking stupid.
I know someone is reading this.

A Bigger Piece of Fire

Six.

Part I.

I was walking down the street with one pocket filled with chicken nuggets and the other filled with marbles. I had a spring in my step because I'd just driven a car into the front door of my house, and I'll tell you why I did it then: because I was taking new pills.

New meds.

And that's a fact-tat-tat-tat.

But really, this isn't about anything.

I had three roommates and they came down on me like the hand of liberty, throwing their arms in the air and stressing the muscles in their necks. As I rolled out of the passenger side door, I followed suit because, in my absence, they'd painted nine Dalmatians on the walls of the living room. I quickly supposed that they had done the same to my room and, based on this supposition, I was out for blood. "Eh? *EH?*!" I exclaimed in the form of a question.

"Whose car is this?!" one of them asked. I can't remember who it was. I was bleeding from both my eyes.

"That's not important! *In no way is that important!*" I threw one of my arms back like a dramatist.

"You've fucked everything up! You're bleeding from both your eyes!" another one shouted. Two of three people, by this point, had addressed the problem.

Part II.

"This is the last time you do this to me!" screamed the first guy. The third one wasn't saying anything. My vision was worsening by the second and I began to wonder if there were truly dogs painted on the wall.

There was no doubt that something new was on the walls; this fact alone drove me into an inconsolable rage.

"Fuck you! I'm going to live forever!" I hollered. I was not behind the veil of chemical influence yet.

"We don't need a door this big! No, no, no, no, *no!*" replied the first guy.

"We need it as big as your huge fucking vagina! I'm taking this back to 1994!" I screamed back. My throat was raw and sore. Immediately after finishing the sentence I vomited on the floor. I was coughing and spitting for most of this entire exchange.

"You are a *curse*. You are a *crucifixion*. Are you taking your pills?! *Fuck!*"

"Heroin pills! I chased them with hemlock and piss! *You don't control me!*"

"Get out of here! And probably come back! I'm drunk and I'm not entirely sure of what's going on!" the first one said, finishing the transaction.

"I don't need all of you, any of you! I'm 99% *sure* I'm half cigarette!"

"Get out and take your fucking car! Take your car and the *slut* you probably have stashed beneath the seats! Take your half robot-cigarette, turkey sucking ass and find a second job or some shit *I don't even give a shit you fucking Jew!*"

"*I'm going to shit my pants!*"

Plus Ninety Five.

There was a slut stuffed under one of the seats, but she was possessed by something vast and wicked, more than two centuries old and hungry for the fear of an entire population.

Part III.

I had lined up 10 hot dates that week, and with that in mind, I was on my way to suicide with a self inflicted gunshot wound to the head.

The nex-

Part IV.

My whole hole life I'd been saying "I shall overcome," and sometime in the late autumn, I decided to carry through on my slogan. The fallen leaves were covered in frost and it was difficult to breathe. Indeed, everything around me was dead, from the vegetation to the coffins what shot up from manholes, to the omnipresent speakers that murmured songs of discontent, to the garbage bins filled with dead animals to the exploded cars hanging from skyscrapers at odd angles; incredible heights. All my friends – my idiot roommates included – were having dreams of Armageddon, and when they told me about them, they spoke quickly, as if at any minute, everything was going to be destroyed. But really, though.

The faster I walked, the faster the piano played. The faster the snare drum bounced back and forth, hotly anticipating the chorus. I needed a gun and I needed to call the girls and make sure everything was in check.

I was wearing a tie with the picture of an awkward looking white guy on it. In my heart I knew that unless I was ironic, I would never end up on a tie.

My gun purchase was tie worthy; I made a B line for the financial district, the previous A line having been somewhere in the cool part of town, where I might get eaten alive by persons more ironic than myself for reasons that could never be explained.

That's how they liked it

Minus Fifty One.

Part V.

It was difficult to go unnoticed in the years after they flew Obama into the World Trade Centres. Those with sway with the things that weave-

Part VI.

- Had long ago decided that within the perimeters of anonymity there grew insane things; cavernous in their corruptibility. Those faceless that toiled away in obscurity were able to get away with murder. Those who lived unappeared were highly capable of evil, unnoticed by those *very same people* who weave and those people who observe them weave *so fucking* closely.

There were no more questions and there was no more doubt; everyone was a celebrity and everyone had their slice of notoriety.

They would see me coming because I had a cult following. People would buy me coffee some days.

Don't ask me what it was I was famous for. Don't ask anyone that.

And don't ask them who will be watching when Armageddon erupts from the public subconscious and comes to harvest us all with a scythe of sick oblivion.

Don't ask them because they know it'll be them.

And don't ask them because they know how important they are.

But seriously, don't worry about it. It's nothing.

Divide By Five.

I was walking to the financial district because I couldn't afford public transit. Geography afforded me a lot of time to think about the world I was living in and how my priorities were shuffled.

A few years prior to my death task, some extraterrestrials appeared –this was after Celebrity Law. I tried to call the Canadian ambassador because I had to register a grievance about wheat, but he wasn't available; the aliens monopolized every political figure and left us citizens wanting.

They came in ships like Christmas trees, hanging over bodies of water or wherever there was the most moisture. They approached us casually- without any time wasted in theatrics - as they identified the structures of law and order, and the bureaucracies that kept them comatose.

The aliens were amazed at our quest for peace and the wars we fought over equality. They were filled simultaneously with confusion and awe about how we were trying to make the world fit for everyone, and how we didn't kill those who were weak. I suppose the idea was that they had surrendered their survival to the cold winds of evolution and came out all the better for it.

It brought into sharp relief how, when confronted with a higher power that verified our baser, angrier selves, we collapsed back into them like an excited child into a beanbag chair.

Truly, when you see the president smoke, it can't be that bad.

We were on the wrong course all along with this peace business.

I guess we had only been doing it to impress someone.

A class war followed and a race war after that, and then another class war. And then a bunch of legitimate wars all over the world, even in the South Pole. Even on the icy tundras where no sane man dared call home, they sent massive ships to do battle. Survival of the fittest was the only law that would suffice besides Celebrity Law, which was working at triple capacity.

Plus Thirty.

Part V.

My death march soon turned into a funeral swagger, and by the second time I made myself fully aware of my surroundings I was halfway downtown. There were taller buildings and ore cars. The exponential nature of it all had my brain registering them as stars or some stuff. I had one hand in my pocket, and the other one holding my coat shut. All the buttons had fallen off because I had bought it from a questionable store; it looked like someone died in it.

It felt dangerous wherever people congregated, and oddly enough, it felt like nobody wanted to be downtown. I had told people that I believed that people had become aware of the nature of complexity too quickly, on too grand a scale, that it drove people to complacency or insanity. Others conjectured that this was not new, but since I could never admit I was wrong, I would always deflect with a non sequiter. I no longer do this. I've learned to trim the middleman and go straight to nonsense.

I believe this to be important, and the route to respect.

I don't pretend to know exactly how the coffins came up from the sewers, but all I know is that they shouldn't be there, and it wouldn't take much research to find out whose misguided idea it was.

Maybe burying the dead was a stupid idea from the start.

I suppose I should bow out of the entire "respect" sphere altogether.

Part VI.

I wanted to kill myself because I felt absolutely no connection to life, and having the knowledge that I at one time I had felt connected, there soon came a depression and sense of loss that sealed the deal. I'm trying as hard as I can to rationalize this feeling and in the process I am betraying it. But as I've been saying the whole time, it doesn't mean anything.

The reason you leave because you are no longer there is the same as talking because you don't know how to act. Sometimes you can't do everything. Sometimes you need to plan and talk. It's the reason we tell stories instead of changing the world. Every time I had a conversation where I ended up agreeing with the other person, a big piece of me died. I wasn't there, and I am not there, and I never will be there, and it's as natural as telling one story or any story.

In a connected world, lack of purpose is immediately disregarded, and that's why we're here right now. This is purposeless.

Divide By Ten.

I shot myself in the head and I didn't die. I don't think life works like that right now, in the future. During my life I've never learned anything from an ending so I don't think my anecdotes should be any different.

Minus One.

Scenario 1

There's a 13 year old boy riding the subway at night. He gets up and begins threatening a woman with a gun. He speaks with the conviction of a man, and also the anger of a lunatic. I walk through the subway towards him while he is asserting his menace. I pull a small crowbar from my pants and strike him in the spine. He collapses to the floor and drops the gun. I lean down to him and he becomes docile and scared like a child, or someone his age. I grab him by the arm and pull him from the subway at the following stop.

"I'm your mommy now," I say to him.

Scenario 2

I walk to my girlfriend's apartment one night after I am done work. Her whole building is made out of porcelain, but it is old and stained in weird ways. I call her to let me in through the front door, but she informs me that there is a zombie standing in the hall outside of her apartment. She explains that she cannot leave or she will be eaten, and I can't come in any obvious way. She lives on the ground floor, and I can see her window beside the front door of the building, but there are bars over it. I have to find the right type of coin or rod that can unscrew the bars so I can get in, but then reattach them after I enter, lest be robbed during the night.

Scenario 3

A man wakes up with another man's memories. He begins living the life he has inherited, assuming the same friends and family. This world is an apathetic world and the friends and family of the original man do not even notice the stranger walking into their lives. The owner of the memories – that original man – is left wandering the docks, in search of answers or clues to what has happened. There are no checks and balances in this world, so problems like this don't even register and some people wander the waterfront forever like dogs.

Scenario 4

A system of telepathic vote tallying that polls every human in every country about every topic, news story, opinion, and rumour. Every news story can therefore be backed up by statistics pulled from the entirety of a nation (ex. 46% of people in Australia do not believe in UFOs.) Each human is tallied hundreds of times a day, inhibiting their productivity. People will exist solely to provide statistics (stat dummies.)

Scenario 5

The city falls under a mass garbage strike while summer arrives. Temporary public garbage drop offs are marred with picketers and the public grows angrier every day. A car jumps the curb to go around one of the picket lines, and the gas tank is ripped open by the stump of a severed stop sign. Gasoline spreads all over the area. Someone launches a lit zippo from a slingshot 30 metres away, causing flames to spread.

Scenario 6

A man hangs out with dogs all the time and takes care of them. He ends up writing the best book in the history of mankind. He brings it to a local warehouse, filled with a million monkeys on a million typewriters. He shows them his masterpiece and they become jealous. They go to

work trying to combine the Bible, Star Wars, the Encyclopaedia Britannica, Evil Dead, and Michael Clayton. One of them chews angrily at a cigar.

Scenario 7

An ordinary citizen advertises a “Police BBQ,” inviting all the city’s police officers. The address is an abandoned factory. All the cops file in and cram into a narrow hallway, muttering and looting around motherfuckerishly. “I was promised a hot dog lunch with all the fixins!” one exclaims from the crowd. The citizen tosses a plastic bag full of uncooked chicken thighs to the ground: “You figure it fucking out.”

He exits the building and chains the front doors shut. He returns hours later and hears a raucous party occurring from within. He unchains the floor and an officer stumbles out with a lampshade on his head, and a tie fixed around the lampshade.

“Thank you... thank *you for this BBQ!*” he shouts, spitting crumbs with every slurred syllable.

*** ZINC BROTHERS SELF STORAGE ***

- A shirt made out of trains (haunted?)
- Idiot baby landlord.
- An illiterate prostitute rewrites the dictionary with newspaper clippings.
- A yelling pen.
- City of piano and cello.
- The mother of a policewoman thinks stamps talk to her.
- Starship sandwich (corned beef.)
- Time machine in a whale.
- A sword capable of piercing a star.
- Necktie made of fire (black and blue.)
- A short, fat Polish man who steals holes.
- A gang of children form a gang that gambles excessively during recess. Gamble gang.
- Shark boomerang.
- Thirty small books filled with the sum knowledge of death.
- John Turturro runs the world.
- Cum flavoured gum called "Prostichew."
- Forest factory.
- 2 choirs infected with terminal illnesses fight eachother in a massive orchestral recording room.
- Ants making a robot out of gum (man sized)
- A woman who makes security cameras in her basement
- A strobe light tank fight.
- "Cashmere LaMar."
- Technology is cannibalistic.
- Bacon 'n Eggs Soda.
- A snake wakes up inside a lightning bolt.
- Jack of All Trades walks the moon with a backpack full of comic books.
- A giant spider climbs around a field covered in antennas.
- All the trees in the world turn into ladders.
- A spoon that never stops twisting.
- A back alley barber operating beside a back alley gynaecologist. Competing for crossover business.
- A firefighter wants to make everything about something.
- Wars of destruction vs. feuds of creation.
-

DOCTOR NOSTYLE

"I cannot be depressed while people are starving."
"There is nothing anyone can do with this confession."
/I'm Doctor Intrigue/ Nobodon

The doctor had shifted forms into a mechanic wearing a yellow jacket.
The hospital's borders had dissolved, allowing realities to merge.
The hospital was the whole world.
Everyone was the same villain, walking around trying to convince every other one that they had good characteristics. They invented heroes like me to give themselves evidence, from each other, for each other, towards each other, upon each other.
But I don't really exist. I'm not really here.
But I don't really exist. I'm not really here.
I had told him:
"I'll reinvent the fire with the same five words."
Somethingsomething gun somethingsomething whore somethingsomething cash
It's one for the money and two for the cash and three money blood blood for the bath
"I bring a close to my various miseries."
He had wanted all the ugliest things I could think of and pocketed them like a tar pit.
I could see him melting in my peripheral vision, like a dog. Like a dog. Like a dog.
I had told him:
"It used to be truth was defined by action, but now it seems to be defined by the hyperbole of fiction; don't ask me when it happened, I'm not the person to answer that."

I stepped out into the new world and he was a mid morphed ocean.
"I hate oceans."

I had told the doctor once that we are all weak for outer space. He had traversed my mercenarious experiences and this is what I get. This is what I walk away with; touched and cold.

"the greatest trick god ever played on man was making him believe that that the devil was still living in the basement."
"the second was faking the devil's death in the form of rebellion"
"the third is everything else"

Handicap Yellow

A Story for Stage on Yawni Code

CAST

Ident Math. *Female Protagonist.*

KinderKan. *Nonvisible Ambassador to Fabrican't.* On the run from the government.

Queen Pool. *Sovereign ruler of Fabrican't.* 2 women wearing black-and-yellow jumpsuits enclosed in a glass dome.

Won Bicyclette. *Real Estate Tycoon and absentee father of Queen Pool's children.* Long sideburns, dark suit.

Vert Sluglips. *Miserable, struggling writer employed by Queen Pool.* He has green slugs for lips.

Noiseworthy. *Queen Pool's villainous pet snake.*

Catharsis Rat. *Confused, prescient rat in a witch hat.*

Mr. Cordial. *Physician to Queen Pool; also in love with her.*

Boys Diabolik. *Queen Pool's apocalyptic twin children.*

Bend. *Corrupt chief of the Thought Police.* Dresses like an English Bobby.

Gasoline Seven Point Three. *Nonvisible leader of the subterranean Watercooler Mob.*

Pilot. *Driver of the truck.* Stuck in the future.

Exclamation Point. *Adulterous lover of Ident Math's ex husband.* Doesn't have a face.

SETTING

The rural nation of Fabrican't, on developed highway that runs through it, mainly farmland, fields, and forests. The capital city is filled with castles, apartment buildings, and scum.
Everything is made of limestone.

TIME

Present, details undesignated; there is perpetual daylight. The duration of a cross-country road trip, nonstop, assumedly a couple of days.

Act I

Scene 1

(Inside the living room of a moving house there sits a woman named IDENT MATH with her back to a window and a small table to her right. A tall black witch hat sits on the floor to her far left. She grabs a small black tape recorder from the table and presses the “play” button. A recording begins.)

PILOT TAPE
(Voice.)

Good afternoon, Miss. My name is Chris Number Two, your driver, and I am recording this for you because I will be ahead of you in time for the duration of the trip, and for me to contact you before we stop would ruin the universe. I thought I'd take this time to thank you on behalf T. Cook Enterprises for trusting your house to the most skilled hands in the business, voted 5 years in a row by Tomkins Magazine. You have trusted T. Cook Moving to relocate your home in the shortest amount of time as well as with the most sophisticated –

(IDENT MATH clicks off the tape recorder and places it back on the table. She leans back and exhales.)

CATHARSIS RAT
(Voice.)

I envy him!

(IDENT MATH recoils slightly away from the voice.)

CATHARSIS RAT
(Voice.)

He sounds very happy. People must be elated in the future. I've seen it so I know this to be true!

(IDENT MATH stands up and surveys the room cautiously.)

Who's that?
IDENT MATH

Who's asking?
CATHARSIS RAT

This is my house!
IDENT MATH
(Defensively.)

I've known it since he start!
CATHARSIS RAT

(A black rat crawls out from inside the witch hat to IDENT MATH'S far left.)

I promise you that it's not as it appears!
CATHARSIS RAT

Rat in the hat!
IDENT MATH
(Stands up sharply.)

You tell it like it is! I've been saying it the whole time!
CATHARSIS RAT

Who told you that? Was it another rat?
IDENT MATH

No. That wouldn't make any sense.
CATHARSIS RAT

How long have you been in there? How come you didn't speak up before now?
IDENT MATH
(Circles CATHARSIS RAT cautiously.)

CATHARSIS RAT

I wanted to wait until we were on the open road so you wouldn't have a scare!

IDENT MATH

But now I feel backed into a corner.

CATHARSIS RAT

You are taking this very well! I think I love you.

IDENT MATH

I'll just break your heart, you know.

CATHARSIS RAT

I had a good feeling about you. You have a kind voice and you walk softly. That counts for something, and I know everything. Where did you buy the hat, if you don't mind me asking?

IDENT MATH

From a street vendor.

CATHARSIS RAT

Just to ask to ask again- I'm sorry if I'm asking too much - what drove you to buy this hat?

IDENT MATH

I thought you knew everything.

CATHARSIS RAT

I was under a spell. Please answer my question. It's pretty important, and we're having fun.

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

Well, the vendor looked like Ernest Hemmingway.

CATHARSIS RAT

Is that all? I ask again, *is that all?*

IDENT MATH

Yes... well, you see, that means something to me, is why I did it.

CATHARSIS RAT

Yes... Yeeeeeee-

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

Eh... awhile ago I read an article in the Liberal Media that claimed Ernest Hemmingway was not real. They said he was an invention. Or a pathetic fallacy. They were saying he might have been an angry cloud.

CATHARSIS RAT

Is that the truth?

IDENT MATH

I believe that Ernest Hemmingway was real. There's something in life you know for certain. This was my way of supporting it. Buying this hat from... this guy. This *man*.

CATHARSIS RAT

I don't not believe it.

IDENT MATH

(Looks down and away.)

I've got a hat with a taking rat living... inside of it.

CATHARSIS RAT

I'll say it again, you don't seem that surprised, all things considered. Because I can tell that last thing you said was fake.

(Pause.)

CATHARSIS RAT

Because I know everything.

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

I'm tired. I just... I'll probably come back to this later. If that's okay.

CATHARSIS RAT

Something brought us together. Do you agree?

IDENT MATH

I suppose I should believe you, since you can see the future.

CATHARSIS RAT

I didn't think you were paying attention.

IDENT MATH

I'm just tired...

(IDENT MATH looks back at CATHARSIS RAT.)

IDENT MATH

What's your name, rat?

CATHARSIS RAT

I don't have one so don't ask me again!

IDENT MATH

(Leans back.)

Okay.

CATHARSIS RAT

I understand that, like your soft footsteps, this is an act, and I apologize for the inconvenience. I will make it worth your while.

IDENT MATH

If you mean sexually, that boat has sailed.

CATHARSIS RAT

Then I will subscribe you to my wealth of knowledge!

(IDENT MATH walks over to the couch and sits on the arm rest.)

IDENT MATH

Your brain is much smaller than mine. I'm amazed that you can raise your voice. Even your grasp of the English language is a stretch.

CATHARSIS RAT

Truthfully I store my wealth of knowledge in my entire body.

IDENT MATH

I believe you for the reasons that you can speak and that you also complimented my sharpness.

CATHARSIS RAT

Yes I am proud of that – when I said that. I’m also pleasantly surprised at your grasp of the English language, yourself a woman.

IDENT MATH

We will *not* be companions much longer. This house is going to be-

CATHARSIS RAT

Let it sink in!

IDENT MATH

Why did it take me so long to register that insult?

CATHARSIS RAT

I had to prove to you that I am from the future! I just spoke from the future!

IDENT MATH

I don’t know how that works.

CATHARSIS RAT

What I cannot comprehend *how works of* is why an invisible man feels it necessary to hide out in plain view! Perhaps he can explain it.

(They both pause, IDENT MATH puzzled.)

AMBASSADOR

(voice)

I’d rather not.

(IDENT MATH swings her head towards the direction of the noise, then around the room.)

IDENT MATH

Who’s that?

AMBASSADOR

Will you attack me if I tell you?

IDENT MATH

We’ll never know unless you get the stone rolling.

AMBASSADOR

I’m by the chair.

(IDENT MATH runs to the chair and shoves it against the wall.)

AMBASSADOR

I thought you were supposed to be sharp! I had *heard* that you were sharp!

CATHARSIS RAT

I will not be disproven! Woman, recite a fact!

IDENT MATH

Be quiet.

CATHARSIS RAT

You've made a fool of me! Cockroaches can be severed and survive! Hither!

IDENT MATH

That's not interesting.

AMBASSADOR

A rat that talks? Incredible!

(IDENT MATH turns to face the direction of the door.)

IDENT MATH

You've been here the whole time. Don't be fresh.

AMBASSADOR

You've reclaimed your title, miss. Miss Fresh!

CATHARSIS RAT

I know why you're here, but it puzzled me why you pursue such a futile quest. I will know within moments, however, so you might as well not say anything!

IDENT MATH

Are you talking to me?

CATHARSIS RAT

Not at all!

AMBASSADOR

I am on the run from the law. How is it you could know this? I mean...

(Pause.)

AMBASSADOR

I am on the run from an elephant.

CATHARSIS RAT

I can see through you, villain! Through your deceit! Through your *god damned lies!*

IDENT MATH

He says he's a walking brain.

CATHARSIS RAT

I know all things. I am literally *full* of knowledge.

IDENT MATH

(Turns to CATHARSIS RAT.)

How come you are so confused?

CATHARSIS RAT

I can't comprehend you people! You people that heed things that negate math!

IDENT MATH

Talking rat, you're crazy.

CATHARSIS RAT

This is not about you!

AMBASSADOR

I sincerely regret breaking and entering. You're all insane or stupid.

(Footsteps sound from the door over to the loveseat next to the couch.)

IDENT MATH

Where are you? Are you wearing an invisibility cloak? Or are you a ghost or something?

AMBASSADOR

I am a non-visible, yes. The first one. The first one you sad.

CATHARSIS RAT

I could have told you that. *But - I - didn't.*

IDENT MATH

What are you doing here?

AMBASSADOR

I am hiding. I hope you don't mind. I did not expect to be discovered. This didn't go at all according to plan.

IDENT MATH

No, it's fine. Don't panic.

AMBASSADOR

I'm panicking!

IDENT MATH
(Urgent.)

No, don't panic. You're going to make a mess.

AMBASSADOR

What do I do? What the hell do I do?! I've been discovered! I'm starting to feel sick!

IDENT MATH
(Calming.)

Take a breath. There is nothing to worry about, you can stay. Don't make a mess.

AMBASSADOR

Lovely!

IDENT MATH

I'm at a point of transition, so I don't know if you're going to want to stay here for long. It's very high key. This is literally a big house barreling down the road.

AMBASSADOR

Are you going somewhere outside of Fabricant's?

IDENT MATH

Yes, Leatherbound; it's just outside of it.

AMBASSADOR

Perfect!

(IDENT MATH stands up again and walks towards the window by the table.)

IDENT MATH

And I know you must get this a lot –

CATHARSIS RAT

He doesn't really!

IDENT MATH

-but what are you running from?

(The loveseat is pushed back slightly and footsteps move from it.
IDENT MATH turns towards it sharply.)

IDENT MATH

You ruined it! You're making a mess!

(Pause.)

(The loveseat inches forward to where it was initially.)

IDENT MATH

(Turns back to window.)

Thank you.

AMBASSADOR

The short story is I'm running from the Thought Police.

CATHARSIS RAT

Heavens to Betsy!

IDENT MATH

And the long story?

(Footsteps sound leading from the chair to somewhere else in the
room.)

AMBASSADOR

Well, the long story is that Queen Pool wants me dead.

(Pause.)

CATHARSIS RAT

That's almost shorter than the first one!

AMBASSADOR

That's it! The queen wants me dead! That's the story!

IDENT MATH

Why? What did you do?

AMBASSADOR

Well- and this is all speculation- but I'm the only one who knows how she came to power. And I think that's enough.

IDENT MATH

You were close to her, then?

AMBASSADOR

I am the ambassador of Fabrican't. Or, rather, was. Until she decided to have me executed. Or, I might still be, she works in mysterious ways. I might have the title forever, in death.

IDENT MATH

I'm sorry.

CATHARSIS RAT

The Queen, *spit!*

IDENT MATH

You have the upper hand, though. You're invisible. You sort of have free reign over your freedom.

AMBASSADOR

Non-visibles were outlawed a long time ago. It is not out of the ordinary for the Thought Police to pursue someone like me. If I keep moving, you see, and get out of the country, then I might live to see the next year. And there's not a lot of people leaving the country, so...

IDENT MATH

Okay. So, how was it other non-visibles got away, then?

AMBASSADOR

The thing is that all the others did not actually escape. They- they- they went underground. Live in boxcars, and when they're collected like that, the Thought Police won't go after them, because they're angry in numbers. I'm high profile so it'd be easy to figure out what I would do.

(More footsteps wander about the room.)

IDENT MATH

Why not go and live with them? I hate to be the bearer of bad news but non-visibles are out of the ordinary in the free world. You might have regular police interested. Dogs have never seen a non visible, either. You need to think about dogs.

AMBASSADOR

That is out of the question. Don't even start with that.

CATHARSIS RAT

He's got something to say about it.

(IDENT MATH leans against the wall.)

AMBASSADOR

There is a reason rats don't talk, right?

CATHARSIS RAT

Because we have nothing good to say? Not even a little?

AMBASSADOR

...Yes. Exactly! That is *exactly* the thing!

CATHARSIS RAT

Po-mo!

AMBASSADOR

To answer your question, the non-visibles will kill me just as quick, if not with more glee and zest, as Queen Pool. More lust for life, right. They hate me. I'm wanted by both sides. Both awful, venomous sides.

IDENT MATH

Because of the Quee-

AMBASSADOR

The Queen, yes, the Queen. This is *all about* the Queen. *Everything* in Fabrican't leads back to that castle.

(Further footsteps wander.)

IDENT MATH

Well, as I said, you're welcome to stay here, you and the talking rat; please don't let me say that again.

CATHARSIS RAT

You will regret not an inch of that sentence, madam!

IDENT MATH

Miss.

CATHARSIS RAT

Math!

(End Scene)

ACT I

Scene 2

(Large room within QUEEN POOL'S castle. QUEEN POOL stands within a large glass dome. WON BICYCLETTE stands at a table with his back to her, reading through collected files. MR. CORDIAL inspects QUEEN 1's enlarged belly.)

MR. CORDIAL

They are progressing astonishingly well, mum. I'd say one and one half weeks, at most. Birth Estimation goes in waves, though. We might be in this wave for two, but no more than three.

QUEEN 1

Lovely.

QUEEN 2

Do you have any documents?

(Pause.)

MR. CORDIAL

No, I'm afraid that they're utilizing some radio frequency that practically destroys any instruments to observe them, classifying paperwork as a flight of fancy. I lost several machines this morning. It's libel to linger, at the same time, haunting these hallowed corridors like a phantom.

QUEEN 1

Fantastic!

QUEEN 2

This fills us with pride, Mr. Cordial. And what of the surgery?

MR. CORDIAL

I will have the devices ready by the end of tomorrow. I can have them installed as soon as... well, the day after, ideally.

QUEEN 2

Satisfactory. The soonest possible. It is absolutely necessary that our children be granted the most experience before birth.

MR. CORDIAL

(Runs his hands on QUEEN 2's belly.)

Of course, of course. I will be careful not to harm your... gorgeous form.

QUEEN 2

Hm...

(Awkward pause. Mr. Cordial licks his lips.)

MR. CORDIAL

Hmmmm... right, the tests... they're all clear. Everything is fine. So...

QUEEN 1

Hm.

QUEEN 2

That won't be necessary. This pleases us, though. You have earned your life. It's time for bed.

MR. CORDIAL

Yes, mum... And, about what you promised earlier...

QUEEN 2

Yes, yes, later. We are weary.

MR. CORDIAL

Right, right. I understand. You need not tell me more than enough!

QUEEN 1

Now-

QUEEN 2

Before you depart, a riddle.

MR. CORDIAL

Yes, of course. Of course...

QUEEN 1

How is it that a snake cannot aspire yet a worm can arbitrate all things?

(There is a pause of contemplation.)

QUEEN 2

To bed, Mr. Cordial.

MR. CORDIAL

Pleasant dreams mum.

(A glass box lowers from above, roughly the size of a dog cage.
MR. CORDIAL climbs in the box and it lifts away.)

WON BICYCLETTE

(voice)

You're not really going to kiss him are you?

(WON BICYCLETTE commands the room. QUEEN 2 steps forward
and forces QUEEN 1 into the background.)

QUEEN 2

It keeps him at sustained.

WON BICYCLETTE

Things like this turn on you. You must not be caught unawares. Y'all understand?

QUEEN 2

For the moment it is all necessary. If his heart is not in us then it is not in his work.

(WON BICYCLETTE raises his head, not giving full attention to his
papers, shuffling nonetheless.)

WON BICYCLETTE

I am sure you are not unawares to deception. I have little faith, however, in your awareness as
an entity in and of itself.

QUEEN 2

You have your own affairs to address, don't you?

WON BICYCLETTE

Don't you worry about me.

(WON BICYCLETTE lets the papers in his hands drop to the table.)

QUEEN 2

Perhaps you could relinquish the city hall for a grand nursery?

(WON BICYCLETTE swivels around to face QUEEN POOL.)

WON BICYCLETTE

Where would I keep my stagecoach and horse collection, then? Answer me that! *Riddle* me that!

QUEEN 1

Intolerable!

QUEEN 2

The untamed feralcy!

(WON BICYCLETTE steps forth with measured impudence.)

WON BICYCLETTE

Do not weigh on me with your delusions of grandeur!

QUEEN 2

You had best prepare an equal or greater facility for the coming of the Boys Diabolik. They have a terrible temper. And you'll have to secure it all by yourself, meaning with money or constructing it with your bare hands.

WON BICYCLETTE

I already assured you.

QUEEN 2

There is no need to keep these things away from me.

WON BICYCLETTE

Well, here it is, then. I am considering what you mentioned a few days ago. There it is.

QUEEN 2

Another one of my bad ideas?

WON BICYCLETTE

No, merely a suggestion beyond your comprehension. I was able to glorify it.

QUEEN 1

Admirable.

QUEEN 2

And *your* and *our* glorious plan is?

WON BICYCLETTE

The free world, mum.

QUEEN 2

Oh, how po-mo.

WON BICYCLETTE

Yes, but not beyond my abilities.

(WON BICYCLETTE turns back to the table and skims through his files.)

WON BICYCLETTE (contd.)

I am in the throes of finalizing plans to claim real estate outside of Fabrican't – grand real estate, so don't change anything around within the next few days. I've got a couple of castles on the go as well as thousands of acres of farmland. Within the year I will have wealth beyond even your vast, quasar imagination.

QUEEN 1

Grand...iose.

QUEEN 2

And so what are your detailed plans for the housing of our child?

(Pause.)

WON BICYCLETTE

I found a tower in a town city surrounding Leatherbound. It was used by the Sultan. Once I acquire it, I will denote a considerable section for the child. It's not finalized yet, so-

QUEEN 2

What does it look like? How big is it?

(Pause)

WON BICYCLETTE

(Sigh-groans.)

It's a lot like your father. You'll like it.

QUEEN 2

Ah, so you're not so hopeless after all.

(WON BICYCLETTE lifts a shoulder bag from the floor and begins filing papers into it.)

WON BICYCLETTE

I will be leaving soon to finalize some arrangements. I'll be gone for a few weeks. I'm going to get the giant person-building first, because obviously, that's the important thing, right? Nevermind the agricultural opportunities. Never mind food... because that would be stupid.

QUEEN 2

Oh how will we be able to survive?

WON BICYCLETTE

If there is an error or a lost page, or news or something you just need to tell me, then you will be able to contact me. Call me about anything. Call me just to talk, if you want. I don't assume anything will happen, nothing ever does around here.

QUEEN 1

Curious.

WON BICYCLETTE

In this... *fucking* place...

QUEEN 2

The best of luck then. Will we be able to impart a goodbye before the time-

WON BICYCLETTE

Yes, yes. Arrangements will be made. Cheque's in the mail. I have to go. Sleep well, mum. Hugs and hellos. Halos. Don't forget we're married, and that sleeping with Mr. Cordial might be adultery.

(WON BICYCLETTE shoulders his bag and begins walking.)

WON BICYCLETTE (contd.)

I'm not trying to tell you what to do, of course, but if presented with adultery or anything akin to that, just turn the other cheek. You're not listening. It's cool.

QUEEN 2

This is a very serious wave. Mr. Cordial told us directly.

WON BICYCLETTE

That's how people talk when they're talking to you. But he's also talking to future you. The you he wants to mate with. Kisses!

(WON BICYCLETTE exits.)

QUEEN 1

Intolerable.

(End Scene.)

ACT 1

Scene 3

(Large room within QUEEN POOL'S castle. A green snake named NOISEWORTHY slithers across the ground towards a man, VERT SLUGLIPS, clinging to a wall, covered with the forms of women embedded in the plaster.)

NOISEWORTHY

Vert Sluglips, where does the evening find you this time?

VERT SLUGLIPS

Tell me again, Noiseworthy, why is this?

NOISEWORTHY

Whatever do you mean?

VERT SLUGLIPS

The walls. The *women*.

NOISEWORTHY

Your uncle Won Bicyclette, it was his wish. It was his design as well. He's a very good artist.

VERT SLUGLIPS

Tell it like a story. Tell it like a fairytale, like last time.

NOISEWORTHY

There is no way I can make it any more fantastic than you have-

VERT SLUGLIPS

Just say it in... However you want...

NOISEWORTHY

Well... Then Sluglips, your great uncle Won Bicyclette, one foggy December morn, was reading over papers delivered to him by his children, Anteater and Blasphemy.

(VERT SLUGLIPS turns away from the wall to face NOISEWORTHY.)

VERT SLUGLIPS

And what did they look like? What kind of boys were they?

NOISEWORTHY

Let's consider this. Well, Anteater was 3 feet tall and had a long nose. He used it to sniff up women's' skirts, obsessed as he was with their undercarriages. He was a mischievous boy, and lately he had become much more perverted than his father was comfortable with. When he was aroused, his hands would shake, and his bones would become disengaged and click-clack together.

VERT SLUGLIPS

What was Blasphemy's favourite colour?

NOSIEWORTHY

His favourite colour.

(Pause.)

NOISEWORTHY (cont.)

His favourite colour was orange. All his shoes were orange. Some say he was an obsessive compulsive-

VERT SLUGLIPS

What about the papers?

NOISEWORTHY

I was getting to that-

VERT SLUGLIPS

Were they important? What was on them?

(Pause.)

NOISEWORTHY

Yes, they were. The papers were to this castle. Uncle Bicyclette was buying the castle from the Queen for an astonishingly low amount. You see, Vert Sluglips, your uncle owned most everything else in this country, and many people considered him the true sovereign. Like a King.

VERT SLUGLIPS

Did he own city hall?

NOISEWORTHY

He owned city hall. At the dawn of time Won Bicyclette appeared amid chaos and havoc and slight gnashing of teeth, and signed the deed for city hall. Speculation indicates that it was such a good idea he bent the universe around his brain to snatch it up before anyone else.

VERT SLUGLIPS

Why did he want the castle?

NOISEWORTHY

Because he loves this country very much. You can read about it in his unauthorized biography.

VERT SLUGLIPS

I can't find it anywhere.

NOISEWORTHY

Literature is rare in Fabrican't. But you knew that.

VERT SLUGLIPS

I know. I knew.

NOISEWORTHY

Your uncle is a renowned philanthropist and entrepreneur. Ever since the fall of slavery there has been much legislation committed to dashing all dreams of owning a human being, but your uncle was ever vigilant.

VERT SLUGLIPS

What did he do, Noiseworthy? What did he do about it?

(VERT SLUGLIPS arcs his legs up, rests his arms on his knees and his head on his arms. He begins rocking slowly.)

NOISEWORTHY

After Won bought the castle he commissioned several wings to be built. They spread out from the center, like a big spider. These new wings would have the bodies of ten thousand virgins cemented into the wall, and in summation, grant him the ability to boast that he legally owned ten thousand women.

VERT SLUGLIPS

(Turns around and caresses hands on wall.)

I love these women.

NOISEWORTHY

Some men love the sea. Or so I am told.

VERT SLUGLIPS

They inspire me.

NOISEWORTHY

That's good. Your life is on the line if you don't keep up production. Or so I hear.

VERT SLUGLIPS

I know. I know. Thanks for telling me the story again. It keeps me grounded, you know how it is.

NOISEWORTHY

It was my pleasure. Everyone needs to be a baby sometimes.

VERT SLUGLIPS

Really?

NOISEWORTHY

As really as the women.

VERT SLUGLIPS

That's... thank you. That means a lot.

NOISEWORTHY

I do, however, have somewhat of an ulterior motif.

VERT SLUGLIPS

(Turns away from the wall.)

What is it?

NOISEWORTHY

Your next project.

(Pause.)

NOISEWORTHY (Contd.)

I have some ideas. Loose suggestions, really, but I think I might be able to help with the next commission. What do you think?

VERT SLUGLIPS

Yeah, alright.

NOISEWORTHY

Perfectly acceptable.

(Pause.)

VERT SLUGLIPS

Do you... write *often*?

NOISEWORTHY

I find the less I write the better I am.

(Pause.)

VERT SLUGLIPS

Oh...

(Pause.)

NOISEWORTHY

You enjoy yourself. And remember what I said.

(NOISEWORTHY slithers away.)

VERT SLUGLIPS

You didn't say anything new.

(Pause.)

VERT SLUGLIPS

I know.

End Scene.)

ACT I

Scene 4

(Inside a snowy room, WON BICYCLETTE stands before a giant nautical wheel, piloting a strange ship. A corded phone rings, and he answers it.)

WON BICYCLETTE

Hello then?

VOICE

Good afternoon Mr. Bicyclette. I have an urgent message care of the Machine Shop.

WON BICYCLETTE

Out with it then! I'm in no mood. For anything.

VOICE

They say that there is a piece of property careening through Fabrican't. They tell me that it is a house that you do not own.

WON BICYCLETTE

I did not get born at the dawn of time to now own a house being shipped through my country.

VOICE

Sir.

WON BICYCLETTE

Send me the details, including phone number, through either fax or VCR. I will attend to this one myself.

VOICE

Yes, sir. Thank you sir. The Queen also requests your audience. She said she can call-

WON BICYCLETTE

Tell her I mumbled something about a spectrum. And then I repeated myself. Also tell her I was receiving a sexual favour. And then report back to me with her reaction. And I mean every detail.

VOICE

Yes, sir.

WON BICYCLETTE

Yeah I know!

(WON BICYCLETTE hangs up the phone.)

WON BICYCLETTE

It's cold in here in hell!

(End scene.)

ACT I

Scene 5.

(Inside the living room of the traveling house, IDENT MATH lies across a couch on a wall that runs parallel to the wall with the window. The CATHARSIS RAT has moved and dragged the hat behind it like a hermit crab.)

CATHARSIS RAT

Let us talk of betrayal!

AMBASSADOR

Okay, look here. We, regular people, hate betrayal because it generally means one weakness was exploited and we feel foolish for letting ourselves be hurt. Also it is crippling to lose a compatriot, the betrayer. Something like that. It's different for everyone.

(Pause.)

CATHARSIS RAT

I still...

(Pause.)

AMBASSADOR

Um- I don't know how else to explain it. It's really simple.

CATHARSIS RAT

Why do you people not make art?

AMBASSADOR

(Sighs.)

Not everybody can make art.

CATHARSIS RAT

I have evidence to the contrary.

AMBASSADOR

Okay, you see, here is your problem.

CATHARSIS RAT

What do you mean?! *Problem?!*

AMBASSADOR

You see... you just... fucking... don't *get* this stuff. You don't understand why betrayal hurts people? You don't understand why we're not all mathematicians? You're like a – a b... a book that doesn't know how to read or write. An *illiterate book*. That's you! Writ large!

CATHARSIS RAT

There is no reason why not!

(IDENT MATH thrusts her arm down on the side of the couch in a huff.)

IDENT MATH

Don't even bother. Stop trying to answer him. Rat, stop asking questions.

CATHARSIS RAT

But I must know! It is the one thing that escapes me.

IDENT MATH

(Tosses her arm across her eyes.)

You're going to have to figure it out on your own. The Ambassador is under a lot of stress.

AMBASSADOR

Yeah, I am. So don't ask me why mice don't just get organized or why ... fucking... wolves don't toboggan.

CATHARSIS RAT

To answer each and every question would surely spell the death of me!

IDENT MATH

No, if you find out one fundamental truth, I bet you'll be able to answer them all.

CATHARSIS RAT

You really think so?

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

I really, really do.

AMBASSADOR

Isn't that what math is all about?

CATHARSIS RAT

YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT MATH IS ALL ABOUT!

AMBASSADOR

This isn't a barn! We're not in a barn right now! Stop yelling!

IDENT MATH

Both of you quiet down!

CATHARSIS RAT

Am I allowed to ask questions to make casual conversation?

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

You've proven that you can't.

CATHARSIS RAT

I've gotten it all out of my system.

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

Maybe alright.

CATHARSIS RAT

Much obliged.

(Pause.)

CATHARSIS RAT

Mr. Ambassador?

(Pause.)

AMBASSADOR

Yes?

CATHARSIS RAT

What is it that Queen Pool is so afraid of the world knowing that you know?

AMBASSADOR

I thought you know everything.

CATHARSIS RAT

I want to see if your story matches mine.

IDENT MATH

I'd like to hear that too. It sounds juicy.

(Pause.)

AMBASSADOR

(Exhales.)

Yeah, alright. Where to start.

(Pause.)

AMBASSADOR

Okay, well, her name is Queen Pool, and her father was this giant stone tower on the East End. She was taught this... doctrine, see; some crazy religious dogma, and in one of its sections, it says... uh...that non-visibility is a symptom of infidelity. And infidelity is something that must be "expelled at all costs" as they put it, something.

(Pause.)

And I know this because she told me and she told me because I've been her friend since she was thirteen. I was a friend of Won Bicyclette and I met her through him.

IDENT MATH

And who is this fantastic Won Bicyclette?

AMBASSADOR

He's the one that owns this whole country. He bought all the real estate. He owns city hall and all the land and most of the development on it. The three of us were running things and it was good. It was fun.

IDENT MATH

What about her rise to power?

AMBASSADOR

I am getting to that. I'm just giving some context. The context is important.

CATHARSIS RAT

It really is.

IDENT MATH

Sorry, sorry.

AMBASSADOR

Okay, so her father was not the king but he was on the royal council. Not really important though. The queen at the time was a lady named Porcelain Chameleon. She was a very nice leader. Gracious and kind and merciful. Those were the salad days.

IDENT MATH

Was she very pale?

AMBASSADOR

Oddly enough, no.

IDENT MATH

Thanks for pulling the carpet out from under my feet.

AMBASSADOR

In any event, back then, the Queen was addicted to opium.

IDENT MATH

Porcelain Salamander?

AMBASSADOR

Porcelain Chameleon, and no, Queen Pool. She was addicted to opium and she bit her nails. These are 2 things she doesn't want anyone to know about. Only Won and I know about them and I'm sure that's one of the reasons I am being killed.

IDENT MATH

Is Won on the run too?

AMBASSADOR

No, he's fathering her children.

IDENT MATH
(eyebrows raised)

Scandalous.

AMBASSADOR

Exactly. She has no ties to me. Anyway, she overthrew Porcelain Chameleon. It was spun as her seizing power diplomatically and that Porcelain Chameleon was gravely ill, but in reality, Queen Pool was the sick one, and she had Porcelain Chameleon murdered.

IDENT MATH

How did she pull that off?

AMBASSADOR

The murder?

IDENT MATH

No, making it seem diplomatic.

AMBASSADOR

Uh... I'm not totally sure, to tell you the truth. I know a lot of news agencies were paid off and a body double was hired. I heard rumours of her family being drugged and relocated. And just to answer the non-question, she was killed with a sword.

IDENT MATH

Well I'd have it no other way.

AMBASSADOR

The whole process took months. Everything after the first day was a media parade. The non-visible community was well aware of her father, the tower, and the beliefs he subscribed to. There's this radical group called the Watercooler Mob and they were her biggest protestors.

IDENT MATH

It's not a very good name.

AMBASSADOR

I've campaigned against the name from day one.

IDENT MATH

Good work.

AMBASSADOR

It has to do with water. Something about them... dumping it on themselves, I don't know. Anyway, they saw this whole thing coming, but there was no stopping it. When she came to power she outlawed the non-visibles. Half left and half stayed. The half that stayed went underground. The Watercooler Mob is still there. They're the ones that'll kill me if I go back.

IDENT MATH

So there *are* some that went.

AMBASSADOR

Yeah, but it's not safe out there. There are weird predators out there that hunt *we people* and they can see us.

IDENT MATH

How?

AMBASSADOR

Tongues. Long tongues that can smell blood. They come into the city sometimes. If you make it to city hall you can see some of them impaled in stone.

IDENT MATH

I'd risk it. I'd rather them than a group of violent radicals.

AMBASSADOR

Well, you haven't seen what these things do to bones. And I don't believe you.

IDENT MATH

Just trying to help.

AMBASSADOR

Yeah anyway, this isn't even anything. Queen Pool is trying to kill me. Let's do it.

IDENT MATH

That's a pretty sad story. Is she trying to erase her past, then?

AMBASSADOR

I suppose so. I don't know to what lengths she will pursue this. She is not mentally sound.

IDENT MATH

It doesn't sound like it.

CATHARSIS RAT

Tell her about the snake.

AMBASSADOR

Oh, right. That's not important.

IDENT MATH

No, what snake?

AMBASSADOR

This snake. Queen Pool has this snake named Noiseworthy.

CATHARSIS RAT

Oh give it more credence than that, sir. A gift to a whore! It is, in the *truest sense of the term*, a whore's gift!

IDENT MATH

(leaning into interest)

Oh come on, you *can't not* divulge after a review like that.

(Pause.)

AMBASSADOR

Okay, whatever. This snake was given to the Queen as a present. See a few years ago she started advertising in every newspaper that she was a virgin. Since then she's been receiving thousands of letters from princes and kings and noblemen from around the worlds trying to get with her.

IDENT MATH

Wow, what's going on with that?

AMBASSADOR

I don't know. I don't know why she did it. She's fucked up. So, one present she received was this snake named Noiseworthy. In its culture it is called "Glass Sex", roughly translated, means "Genius snake". I never witnessed anything to verify the rough translation. Apparently the jungle uses mangled English and lies.

IDENT MATH

Oh. Well, what's so important about that?

CATHARSIS RAT

That snake will destroy us all!

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

(narrowing eyes)

Snakes can't do that.

AMBASSADOR

No, it's a pretty weird snake.

IDENT MATH

So you've-

AMBASSADOR

I've talked to it. It can talk. It can't speak English, it can only speak jungle, but that was a long time ago. When she first had it, yeah, she was parading it around and she was so happy. Two fucking weeks later she threw it into one of Bicyclette wings. I had to go feed it from time to time while the guards were emptying the poison from her dome.

IDENT MATH

Do you think the snake can destroy us all, then? And what about this poi-

AMBASSADOR

It probably can. I saw it eat a man, and trust me, this is a very, very small snake.

CATHARSIS RAT

Beware of this rat!

AMBASSADOR

Shut up, it'll get its comeuppance.

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

Well, this has been a day of discovery. You've made this trip worth having, Ambassador. I'll make you a present.

AMBASSADOR

I wait with bated breath.

CATHARSIS RAT

Why do you meet compliment with sarcasm?

AMBASSADOR

It wasn't sarcasm. Look, you tried to play our game and you lost.

CATHARSIS RAT

You people.

AMBASSADOR

Hey, watch-

CATHARSIS RAT

SONS OF BITCHES!

(End scene.)

ACT II

Scene 1

(QUEEN POOL'S castle. WON BICYCLETTE stands at a table and reads over a pile of files. He holds one page up and inspects it closely. He reaches to his right and grabs hold of a telephone. He dials a number.)

IDENT MATH
(Voice.)

Hello?

WON BICYCLETTE

Hello! Who might this be?

IDENT MATH

Who are you?

WON BICYCLETTE

My name is Won Bicyclette, entrepreneur and philanthropist.

IDENT MATH

Won Bicyclette...

WON BICYCLETTE

Yes, I...

(IDENT MATH can be heard muttering to others in the background.)

WON BICYCLETTE (contd.)

Who else is there?

IDENT MATH

Excuse me?

WON BICYCLETTE

(Begins shuffling papers absent-mindedly.)

Do you have others there with you?

IDENT MATH

Well I don't think that's any of your business.

WON BICYCLETTE

Oh, pardon my curtness. That's a... intrusive question, I apologize, not off to a good start. Um, the reason I'm calling is because I am a very high ranking Member of Parliament and I just received-

(WON fumbles at his desk and retrieves a piece of paper.)

WON BICYCLETTE (contd.)

-A transcript that says that you, one Ident Math, was traveling through some of my territories on a moving house. Is that true?

IDENT MATH

It is. Is there a problem?

WON BICYCLETTE

Problem? No, not a problem, no.

(Pause.)

WON BICYCLETTE (contd.)

It's just that to have a piece of property pass by me is rather out of the ordinary, you understand. It's kind of... strange.

IDENT MATH

Well it's a very small house.

WON BICYCLETTE

Oh, is it? Like, it can fit in your pocket?

IDENT MATH

Pretty much, yes. I'm actually on a bicycle.

WON BICYCLETTE

Wow, that's incredible. Pants pocket or breast?

IDENT MATH

I don't know why anyone would have breast pockets.

WON BICYCLETTE

Well that's because you're a woman. It's questionable whether or not you understand pockets at all, and that's how I just poked a huge hole in your story.

IDENT MATH

(smiling, fake serious)

Oh no, you found me out.

WON BICYCLETTE

(fake serious)

Be careful, this is serious business. I know everything about property here and I just wrestled you out of a lie.

IDENT MATH

Oh my god, did you have to say wrestling?

WON BICYCLETTE

(shuffling papers again)

What's wrong with that? It's what I did. You were there, you must know what it's like to be wrestled.

IDENT MATH

(laughs)

Not in a long time, Mr. Bicyclette.

WON BICYCLETTE

Oh, really.... That's a shame.

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

So, um...

WON BICYCLETTE

The house... The house you're in. I just had a couple of questions, if you don't mind...

IDENT MATH

No, go ahead. But It'll have to be quick. This s actually an emergency line –

WON BICYCLETTE
(stops shuffling)

Oh...

IDENT MATH

- And I don't know how you got through, to be honest.

WON BICYCLETTE

Well I apologize if I caused some sort of problem with my inquiry.

IDENT MATH

No, no, it's not that. Not that at all, don't worry.

CATHARSIS RAT

CLOSE THE DEAL!

WON BICYCLETTE

Sounds like a kid screaming in the background.

IDENT MATH

Oh, no. I don't have any kids.

WON BICYCLETTE

Oh, I see.

IDENT MATH

Divorced, actually. Recently. Fruitless sort of thing.

WON BICYCLETTE

Oh, *really*.

IDENT MATH

And what's that supposed to mean?

WON BICYCLETTE

What? Oh really? It's a legitimate reaction. I'm just interested.

IDENT MATH

Interested? You don't even know what I look like.

WON BICYCLETTE

Well I didn't mean I was interested in *you*.

IDENT MATH

Of course not. That – *that* would be crazy.

WON BICYCLETTE

But if I was... wouldn't that be something?

IDENT MATH

You don't even know what I look like. And, I hear you're going to be a father soon.

WON BICYCLETTE

(head in hand, messing with papers)

Oh?

IDENT MATH

A ha!

WON BICYCLETTE

Well, to address the second point, birth out of necessity is about the same as taxes. Or it turns into that. Or it gets out of your hands. And that's life.

IDENT MATH

Well, you've got that right.

WON BICYCLETTE

(lifts head and leans back in chair)

And, for the first point, why would I need to see you to merely be interested? You sound like a charming, intelligent, *bottomlessly sassy* woman.

IDENT MATH

Is that so?

CATHARSIS RAT

CLOSE THE DEAL!

AMBASSADOR

Shut the hell up!

WON BICYCLETTE

(grabbing a piece of paper)

Uh, yeah. Yeah. In fact, maybe you can help me with a puzzle I got here.

IDENT MATH

Is this a test?

WON BICYCLETTE

Sounds like you're testing me, actually. And if it is, and if you pass, you won't need to receive any more calls about this house.

IDENT MATH

Well, nobody said I didn't want any more calls...

(Pause.)

WON BICYCLETTE

Well, then let's hope you fail the test.

IDENT MATH

Yes, let's.

WON BICYCLETTE

It's a... it's a paragraph, and I can't decipher it's meaning. Maybe you can help me figure it out.

IDENT MATH

I'll give it a shot.

WON BICYCLETTE

(reading paper)

It says: "Autrement dit, le post-modernisme est le "phénomène culturel et intellectuel", d'autant plus que le 1920s' les nouveaux mouvements dans les arts, pendant que la post-modernité se concentre sur outworkings social et politique et des innovations à l'échelle mondiale, d'autant plus que les années 1960 à l'Ouest. Le post-modernisme est une philosophie esthétique, littéraire, politique ou sociale, qui était la base de l'essai de décrire une condition, ou un état d'être, ou quelque chose de concerné avec les changements aux institutions et aux conditions (comme dans Giddens, 1990) comme la post-modernité."

IDENT MATH

It's... French, that much I'm-

WON BICYCLETTE

Well I knew that much, thanks.

IDENT MATH

I recognized a few words, I think, but I don't know what it's about.

WON BICYCLETTE

Well I guess you fail.

IDENT MATH

Well I guess I'll be hearing from you again.

WON BICYCLETTE

Yeah, I gave my word, didn't I?

IDENT MATH

That you did.

WON BICYCLETTE

Just for the sake of conversation, you wouldn't be interested in selling your house, would you?

IDENT MATH

Unfortunately not. I've got somewhere to go with it.

WON BICYCLETTE

I thought as much. It was worth a try. I guess that concludes our business for now.

IDENT MATH
(smiling)

I suppose it does.

WON BICYCLETTE

I'll be in touch. Have a pleasant day.

IDENT MATH

You too.

WON BICYCLETTE hangs up the phone.

CATHARSIS RAT

CLOSE THE DEAL WOMAN!

AMBASSADOR

Someone kill this god damned rat! If you're done flirting with the married man, you know.

IDENT MATH

He said it was a weird situation out of necessity.

AMBASSADOR

Well of course it is. I wasn't saying it was wrong. I'm just mad about this rat here. You can't deny that he needs to go.

IDENT MATH

Stop being so negative!

(WON BICYCLETTE picks it up once more and dials another number. He toys with the loose page on the table.)

BEND

(Voice.)

Bend here.

WON BICYCLETTE

Bend, it's me. How are you?

BEND

Well, we're on assignment-

WON BICYCLETTE

Glad to hear it. Listen, I have a small job for you.

BEND

Yes, sir.

WON BICYCLETTE

Easiest thing in the world, won't take 2 minutes.

BEND

Sir.

WON BICYCLETTE

You sent me a transcript yesterday about a house being transported across my territories?

BEND

I did.

WON BICYCLETTE

See I told you before to put a “for sale” sign on that travelling house.

BEND

Yes, sir.

WON BICYCLETTE

Cancel that order. I changed my mind. *But*, but, keep an eye on it. Make sure nothing bad happens to it. Use your discretion.

BEND

Yes, sir, but where are we supposed to-

WON BICYCLETTE

Now I *know* you don’t want to not do what I say. Because you’re *so* smart.

BEND

Understood. Bend out.

(WON BICYCLETTE hangs up the phone.)

WON BICYCLETTE

Everyone’s so smart...

(End scene.)

ACT II

Scene 2

(The traveling house. IDENT MATH is sitting on the couch. CATHARSIS RAT sits on the table, and the AMBASSADOR is scheming about somewhere nondescript.)

IDENT MATH

So how did you get in here?

AMBASSADOR

I snuck in through the window. Which reminds me, I left my things outside.

IDENT MATH

I will never understand how you got away.

AMBASSADOR

Hold that thought.

(The window by the front door slides open. A backpack hovers in and falls on the floor.)

IDENT MATH

That's a nice backpack.

AMBASSADOR

Thanks, it's not mine.

IDENT MATH

Is there another story here?

AMBASSADOR

Mmmmmmmmaybe.

(Pause.)

(IDENT MATH wanders over to the bag and zips it open. She reaches in and grabs a handful of pieces of paper.)

IDENT MATH

What are these?

AMBASSADOR

Fortunes. I grabbed the bag before I left. I thought it might come in handy.

IDENT MATH

Did you really? Is that the truth? Are you telling the truth right now?

(Pause.)

AMBASSADOR

I wanted to steal something. I thought it might be dollar money.

CATHARSIS RAT

I can reveal it that it is not.

AMBASSADOR

Might have figured when I opened it up and found out for myself.

(IDENT MATH picks out a fortune from the pile and holds it up.)

IDENT MATH
(Reading)

Square circle.

(IDENT MATH grabs another from the pile.)

IDENT MATH
(Reading)

Red blue.

AMBASSADOR

What kind of fortunes are these?!

CATHARSIS RAT

They are oxymorons you voiceless horse!

IDENT MATH

No, they are awful oxymorons. I'm sorry but someone had to say what we were all thinking.

AMBASSADOR

They must be Vert Sluglips's'.

CATHARSIS RAT

Stop reading them Miss; you will damage your sense of poetry.

(IDENT MATH pushes the bag away.)

AMBASSADOR

He's this writer employed by the Queen. He is a terrible writer; hasn't written a decent thing in his life. He wrote me a poem once that made me so angry. *So* angry.

IDENT MATH
(Angered.)

These oxymorons make me *very mad*.

AMBASSADOR
He has that effect on people.

CATHARSIS RAT
I find them oddly comforting.

AMBASSADOR
You just warned Miss against reading them. I submit that you are not all knowing. I submit that you are *an asshole!*

CATHARSIS RAT
I said she would damage her sense of poetry. I do not *impoverish* such *squalor*. They are not without charm. Deliver them to mine side!

(IDENT MATH tosses the bag on the table.)

CATHARSIS RAT
(Running over.)
A feast! A feat of food! A feat for the brain! *The brain that is me!*

AMBASSADOR
I am glad I brought them because it will shut the genius rat up. Maybe for the rest of this trip. Maybe forever.

IDENT MATH
(Tired.)
It's these quotes that'll stick with me. And I mean that in the most... the most *negative* of ways.

(IDENT MATH wanders back to the couch. Footsteps sound to a loveseat near the couch.)

AMBASSADOR
So, for sake of variety, can I ask you a question? I've noticed you avoiding yourself during discussions.

IDENT MATH
Is it that obvious?

AMBASSADOR

No, I'm just a mastermind. It turns out I'm smarter than the brain rat, if that's even possible.

IDENT MATH lays her head down on the table.

IDENT MATH

(Lazily.)

Well then you'd better ask me something before you think me into a butt.

(Pause.)

AMBASSADOR

Why are you taking this house cross-country?

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

That's a big question.

AMBASSADOR

You've asked big questions already.

IDENT MATH

You're right. Um... My husband and I got a divorce earlier this year. This was our house. Or, what the fuck am I saying. It was his house. It was in his name but we bought it together. Pretty much.

AMBASSADOR

That sounds like semantics.

IDENT MATH

It's not. Not at this point.

AMBASSADOR

And... What point is this?

IDENT MATH

Don't... be a *rat* about it. He was having an affair. He said I could keep the house because he's important enough to have more than one and I'm the sort of girl who wouldn't have any otherwise.

AMBASSADOR

Everyone has a place to go.

IDENT MATH

Well I don't. I can't stay with family and the marriage killed the relationships I had with my friends. We didn't go out much near the end. For the second half, I mean. We kind of... I mean, that part's not important.

AMBASSADOR

It might be.

IDENT MATH
(Impatient.)

No, it isn't.

AMBASSADOR

What of your children?

IDENT MATH

We had no children.

AMBASSADOR

Ah. I thought that might have been part of the courtship process earlier.

IDENT MATH

No. Just me and the house. I'm trying to... take it somewhere. Start over again, maybe.

AMBASSADOR

Far be it from me to judge.

IDENT MATH

My thoughts exactly.

CATHARSIS RAT

Right-wrong!

(IDENT MATH props her right arm on the armrest of the couch and rests her head against it. She releases a breath-groan)

AMBASSADOR

I am sorry that your husband had an affair. It's never happened to me.

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

For a moment it exposed the futility of commitment. I learned that wasn't the case, but also learned the futility of having faith in things you can't control.

(Pause.)

AMBASSADOR

That is all that faith is.

IDENT MATH

(Distantly.)

I know...

AMBASSADOR

I'll have you know that you trying to control this through words and rationalization negates your theory.

IDENT MATH

(Offended.)

No it doesn't.

AMBASSADOR

You are not the first visible to denounce faith.

IDENT MATH

It would trouble me to know that I was the smartest person in the world.

AMBASSADOR

So this is a tale of faith no more?

IDENT MATH

The closer it is to you, you know.

AMBASSADOR

Do you really know what you are talking about?

IDENT MATH

That doesn't matter. It's a hole, it's betrayal, it is unapologetic, and it is loss of control. Fuck it, fuck *you*. That's what it is. It's fuck the *world*. It's fuck god because everyone believes in something invisible. Everyone's got some invisible place to be except me.

AMBASSADOR

Do you believe in me?

IDENT MATH

Do you believe in yourself?

AMBASSADOR

Don't *college* your way out of this.

IDENT MATH

I didn't know you went to college.

AMBASSADOR

College isn't a place, it's an attitude. Don't try to change the subject. Don't be *pomo*.

IDENT MATH

You don't claim to be anything. You don't need to explain yourself. You are here and you make sense.

AMBASSADOR

I am so proud.

IDENT MATH

You know why you exist? Because you don't make sense. Because you negate something.

(Pause.)

AMBASSADOR

You've said it all, haven't you?

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

I thought you didn't know what this is like.

I told you, I'm a mastermind.

AMBASSADOR

(Pause.)

That makes two of us.

IDENT MATH

Sky - land!

CATHARSIS RAT

(Pause.)

I stand by what I said.

IDENT MATH

(End Scene.)

ACT II

Scene 3

(Outside of the traveling house is a small group of Thought Police. 2 of them shoulder a "Not For Sale" sign. BEND, the lead officer, signals them to stop.)

BEND

Try and... Put it on the side somewhere. Who's got the shovel?

(A member of the Thought Police steps forward shouldering a shovel.)

BEND

See if you can dig a hole in the side of it. If not we can just lean it against it. Maybe wedge it in somewhere. I don't know...

(The window opens and the group hugs to the wall. A backpack hovers out the window and drops to the ground. BEND looks menacingly at the rest of the group.)

BEND

Put the sign down. Go around to the front door. Queen

THOUGHT POLICE OFFICER

But Bend-

(BEND grabs THOUGHT POLICE OFFICER by the collar and screams madly in his face at close range.)

(End scene.)

ACT II

Scene 4

(Inside the traveling house. IDENT MATH sits with her head slumped back. CATHARSIS RAT remains on the table, staring deeply at a pile of papers before him. BEND kicks the front door in. The THOUGHT POLICE flood inside.)

IDENT MATH

Who the fuck are you?!

BEND

Pardon the intrusion, ma'am, but we have reason to believe there is a non-visible in here.

IDENT MATH

What makes you think that? Did you see him? Oh no, that's right, you didn't. It's impossible.

BEND

Such is the paradox of life, ma'am.

IDENT MATH

(Angry.)

Don't talk to me about paradoxes! I am recently divorced!

BEND

Don't be short with me ma'am. Harboring a non-visible carries a penalty punishable by death.

IDENT MATH

What kind of miserable country is this?!

(BEND leans his head back to gesture to a nearby THOUGHT POLICE OFFICER.)

BEND

Send for the train and additional reinforcements.

THOUGHT POLICE OFFICER

Sir!

(The THOUGHT POLICE OFFICER detaches a walkie-talkie from his waist and begins walking to the front door. BEND reassumes his attention towards IDENT MATH.)

BEND
(Stern-soft.)

Are you absolutely certain that you don't have anything to confess?

(Pause.)

BEND
It would be in your best interest to come clean. I don't suppose a tourist would want to be prosecuted by our high courts.

IDENT MATH
This is an empty road; what were you doing here to begin with?

BEND
That is none of your concern.

IDENT MATH
Does this have anything to do with a Won Bicyclette?

BEND
I said that is none of your concern.

(CATHARSIS RAT crawls into the hat to hide.)

IDENT MATH
(Shaking head.)
Go chase your ghost or whatever it is you're looking for.

BEND
We don't chase ghosts. We follow them and catch them. And they're not ghosts.

(BEND begins sifting through fortunes on the table. He picks up the witch hat, inspects it, and tosses it to the floor.)

IDENT MATH
So how is it that you track something that can't be seen?

BEND
Oh we have our methods.

(BEND leaves the pile of papers and turns back to IDENT MATH.)

IDENT MATH

Well I'm just a tourist so I'm curious is all.

(Pause.)

BEND

(Smirks.)

We have a train. It can smell out other trains. We use that to track the boxcars underground where the non-visibles hide. We also have other instruments aboard the train to find loose ones that try to get away. Things made of tongues. You wouldn't understand.

IDENT MATH

What things? A fog machine? Ghost sniffing dog? Made of tongues?

BEND

They are not ghosts. They are non-visibles. They are abominations. Don't play coy.

IDENT MATH

Sorry, sir. I'm just a tourist. All of this seems very stupid to me.

BEND

I can smell him...

(BEND reaches out and grabs the air with a clutched fist.)

BEND

I'm made of tongues.

AMBASSADOR

(Strained)

You overestimate yourself in the stupidest fucking way!

BEND

What's your name?

AMBASSADOR

(Furious.)

Fuck you!

BEND

(Commanding.)

What's your name?!

AMBASSADOR

I'm the *ambassador* you *bastard*!

(Pause.)

BEND

Well... you didn't get so far after all, did you?

AMBASSADOR

Yeah, would have gotten away if you didn't stumble on me with your *tongue* head up your *tongue* ass.

BEND

Spare me your barbs, KinderKan. The Queen's been so worried about you. She's losing sleep.

AMBASSADOR

She's been worried about all the stuff I might say. And so are you. Cause I know some hilarious things about you too.

BEND

You know she doesn't deserve that kind of talk, Kid, and neither do I. She misses you. She really, really wants you back. She wants you to know that. *I* want you to know that.

AMBASSADOR

Who sent you? Not her; couldn't be the her you know I am talking about. Oh, wait, was it Won? Does he want the house? Cause he was talking to her earlier and they seemed to get on famously, and I know he called you to make sure she would be okay cause *I know how this works*. So you must have taken what you wanted from the both of them to turn it into your *own* mission. Okay, nevermind, I just figured it out. Just now. You're an idiot.

BEND

You're not part of the court anymore, Kid. You don't have any right to speak that way about anyone.

AMBASSADOR

If there's one thing I can assure you of, it's that I've been present for *every part* of this story. You found me the way you found all the others: *luck*! And I'll be the *last one* you ever get!

BEND

You have no idea how many of you we've found and executed ever since the Amtract Act.

AMBASSADOR

I have an idea, yeah. I know you'll never find the ones you *really* want to get. You know that too but you're too far in to do the smart thing and give up.

BEND

Right, we'll see about that.

AMBASSADOR

Whatever; just do what you came here to do. I'm not scared.

BEND

Much obliged. Let's go, gentlemen.

(Two THOUGHT POLICE Officers subdue the non-visible and exit the house. BEND turns around towards IDENT MATH.)

BEND

You stay out of trouble, ma'am.

(BEND exits.)

IDENT MATH

The police took my invisible friend away.

(End scene.)

ACT II

Scene 5

(VERT SLUGLIPS leans against the woman wall scribbling on a notepad. NOISEWORTHY approaches.)

NOISEWORTHY

What is this you're writing?

VERT SLUGLIPS

It is a regal address. The Queen has commissioned it to be read today.

NOISEWORTHY

Is she not with child?

VERT SLUGLIPS

It looks like she wants to win the people over with that very thing. I don't know though. I live nocturnally.

NOISEWORTHY

What does that have to do with things?

VERT SLUGLIPS

I am thinking of developing it later. Into something about werewolves. People love werewolves.

NOISEWORTHY

It doesn't sound that good.

(VERT SLUGLIPS looks up from his pad.)

VERT SLUGLIPS

Why would you say that?

NOISEWORTHY

Everyone's a critic, it seems.

VERT SLUGLIPS.
(Distantly.)

Yeah.

(VERT SLUGLIPS looks back down to his pad and continues writing.
NOISEWORTHY slithers around him.)

NOISEWORTHY

Do you recall what we talked about earlier?

VERT SLUGLIPS
(Absent mindedly.)

What's that?

NOISEWORTHY

You told me earlier that you would let me assist you in your next project.

VERT SLUGLIPS

Yes... I recall that.

NOISEWORTHY

And...?

VERT SLUGLIPS

I don't think this is the time.

NOISEWORTHY

Why?

VERT SLUGLIPS

This is very important. It's the first thing the Queen has asked for in weeks. I think it's best that-

NOISEWORTHY
(Sharply.)

You think what? I'm not asking for a lot.

VERT SLUGLIPS

I can't just let you come in and start writing. I'm almost done.

NOISEWORTHY

I just want to contribute a couple of ideas. May I at least see what you have so far?

(Pause.)

VERT SLUGLIPS

Yes, I suppose.

(VERT SLUGLIPS slides the notepad over to NOISEWORTHY.)

NOISEWORTHY

Thank you.

(NOISEWORTHY reads it over in silence. VERT SLUGLIPS shifts around.)

NOISEWORTHY

It's alright. Very Vert Sluglips.

VERT SLUGLIPS
(Groaning.)

Yes.

NOISEWORTHY

However...

(Pause.)

VERT SLUGLIPS

Yes?

NOISEWORTHY

In the second paragraph...

(Pause.)

VERT SLUGLIPS

What about it.

NOISEWORTHY

May I?

(Pause.)

VERT SLUGLIPS

Sure. Yes, go ahead.

(VERT SLUGLIPS tosses the pencil over to NOISEWORTHY.)

(End scene.)

ACT II

Scene 6

(QUEEN POOL'S castle. MR. CORDIAL stands alone at a laboratory table with 2 heavy periscopes lying before him.)

MR. CORDIAL

Periscopes, you'll win her favour for me.

(Pause.)

MR. CORDIAL (contd.)

Another night in the glass box and I fear that my spine will become forever bended.

NOISEWORTHY (voice)

She wants you.

MR. CORDIAL

Who's that?

(NOISEWORTHY enters from the darkness behind him.)

(Pause.)

NOISEWORTHY

The abysmal devices on the table before you.

MR. CORDIAL

The periscopes?

(Pause.)

NOISEWORTHY

Yes.

MR. CORDIAL
(Amazed.)

Incredible! I had no idea you could talk!

NOISEWORTHY

There is much you don't know. You idiot.

(NOISEWORTHY begins slithering around MR.
CORDIAL.)

MR. CORDIAL

Tell me, how am I to win Queen Pool's heart?

NOISEWORTHY

Have your advances been not met with throbbing, steamy satisfaction?

MR. CORDIAL

No, they have not! I don't know what I'm doing wrong!

NOISEWORTHY

I will advise you how to win her affection.

MR. CORDIAL

Are you at all related to the sink?

NOISEWORTHY

Yes... when you heard the sink talking before, it was my friend...

(Pause.)

NOISEWORTHY (contd.)

...The sink.

MR. CORDIAL

Why do all you devices care about my relationship with the queen?

NOISEWORTHY

You may not be aware but your relationship with the queen affects all things. It is very important. *She* is very important.

MR. CORDIAL

Really? (Interested.)

(Pause.)

Yes... NOISEWORTHY
(Confused.)

So what is it that I should do? MR. CORDIAL

NOISEWORTHY
There is one last trick in the book of courtship; the only one you haven't tried, and I know because I've been watching you. So don't do anything but listen to me.

Yes, yes of course! Please! MR. CORDIAL
(Eager.)

Do you truly love her? NOISEWORTHY

Yes! MR. CORDIAL

Do you adore her? NOISEWORTHY

Yes! MR. CORDIAL

Do you want her? NOISEWORTHY

Yes! MR. CORDIAL

You cannot have her. NOISEWORTHY

(Pause.)

MR. CORDIAL
(Eyes grow wide.)

What?

NOISEWORTHY
(Coldly.)

You can never attain her favour.

MR. CORDIAL

But...

NOISEWORTHY
Don't bother. You live in a glass box above her. There are two degrees of glass between the two of you. She is using you. It is very sad.

MR. CORDIAL

But-

NOISEWORTHY
You are dirt. Regency cannot appreciate dirt. You will never find satisfaction beyond worms!

MR. CORDIAL

I... don't-

NOISEWORTHY

Who do you think you are?

MR. CORDIAL

You said-

NOISEWORTHY
You ruined the only chance you had! You stood a chance at the beginning. I was there. But I guess I was mistaken when I told... *the sink*... that you could do it.

(MR. CORDIAL hunches down over the table like a desperate man.)

MR. CORDIAL
Then surely there is a chance again! If I could do it once -

NOISEWORTHY

There is no rectifying the situation. You are now and forevermore a pauper. You're in that zone and you can't get out.

MR. CORDIAL

I don't believe you. You are not really talking. You're a snake thing.

NOISEWORTHY

What tragedy it would be if your mind were screaming at you to surrender this thing. What tragedy it would be if you knew you were wrong and... didn't stop.

MR. CORDIAL

I... I am insane. I am not thinking straight. My judgment is clouded, then.

NOISEWORTHY

You did not seem so sketchy when we were telling you what you wanted to hear.

(Mr. CORDIAL clutches his head.)

MR. CORDIAL

(Angry.)

Leave me be!

NOISEWORTHY

If you believe this thing can be saved then you are too far gone from... from!

MR. CORDIAL

(Fevered.)

Shut up!

NOISEWORTHY

You will be close to her whilst you install us. If you require evidence-

MR. CORDIAL

(Angry and desperate.)

Shut up!!!

(MR. CORDIAL grabs one of the periscopes and begins smashing it upon the table.)

NOISEWORTHY

Who do you think you are?

MR. CORDIAL
(Angry and desperate.)

Shut up!!!

(MR. CORDIAL smashes the periscope hard over the table and splinters the table in twain.)

NOISEWORTHY
(Sternly.)

You're not even vital enough to be tragic! Who the hell do you think you are, confessing?! Who do you think you are, barging into an important story like this?!

MR. CORDIAL

Get out of my head!

(MR. CORDIAL hurls the handled periscope at the floor.
NOISEWORTHY begins to slink back into the shadows.)

NOISEWORTHY
(Calmly.)

I might be wrong.

(MR. CORDIAL collapses to the floor.)

MR. CORDIAL
(Fatigued.)

Get out of my head.

(NOISEWORTHY exits.)

MR. CORDIAL
(Furious., throwing a hand towards the shadows.)

Get out of my head!!!

(MR. CORDIAL clutches his head once more and is still for several seconds. He drops his arms to the ground and grabs the grounded periscope. He crawls to his feet, grabs the other, and walks away into the darkness.)

(MR. CORDIAL exits.)

(End scene.)

ACT 2

Scene 7

(The Travelling House. IDENT MATH sits at the table with the phone nearby. The phone rings and she answers it. WON BICYCLETTE is on the other line / across the stage.)

IDENT MATH

Hello?

WON BICYCLETTE

Good afternoon, it's Mr. Bicyclette.

IDENT MATH

Someone was here! Someone broke in!

WON BICYCLETTE

Excuse me?

IDENT MATH

They worked for you, or the Queen or somebody. They took a non-visible who-

WON BICYCLETTE

Hold on, there was a non-visible there with you?

IDENT MATH

Yes, he said he was the Ambassador-

WON BICYCLETTE

Are you kidding me? How the hell did he end up there?

IDENT MATH

I don't know, he never said. He had a backpack full of fortunes-

WON BICYCLETTE

God damn it! He's trying to piss me off!

IDENT MATH

Probably. I don't think he liked you.

WON BICYCLETTE

And nobody liked him! Did you even talk to him? Isn't he annoying?

IDENT MATH

Yeah he was, but is there anything you can do? He seemed convinced that whoever was taking him was working outside of your jurisdiction.

WON BICYCLETTE

(Fatigued.)

Yeah I'll see what I can do. Fucking...

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

So what's wrong with you?

WON BICYCLETTE

Besides one of my people trying to discredit me? And the non-visibles on the run? I assume he told you everything. That's kind of what he's there to do now.

IDENT MATH

Yeah, he did. But you sounded angry when you called.

WON BICYCLETTE

Why do you care?

IDENT MATH

I don't know. Maybe I'm crazy.

WON BICYCLETTE

Yeah, maybe...

(Pause.)

WON BICYCLETTE

Just the stress of a marriage in a tailspin. You can relate, I am sure.

IDENT MATH

I can, but from what I hear, it wasn't a marriage out of love, was it?

WON BICYCLETTE

That's true, that's true. But since we started out as friends there was something good there. But a failing marriage burns everything around it, platonic or... otherwise.

IDENT MATH

(Pleasantly uncertain.)

Not always...

WON BICYCLETTE

But you know what I mean. There's got to be some truth to it.

IDENT MATH

I suppose so.

WON BICYCLETTE

So, I guess the new purpose of this call, what does a transient do when not aiding and abiding homeless criminals and defying a real estate empire?

IDENT MATH

When you say it like that it sounds so grand.

WON BICYCLETTE

I work with what you give me. I should be offended but...

IDENT MATH

But...

WON BICYCLETTE

Well, I could never take offense from a kindred, heartbroken spirit.

IDENT MATH

You're presupposing a lot.

WON BICYCLETTE

Well you haven't corrected me yet.

IDENT MATH

Very true.

WON BICYCLETTE

So, about the question I just asked.

IDENT MATH

What do I do? Well... nothing really. Nothing these days.

WON BICYCLETTE

What happened? Did you turn into an old person?

IDENT MATH

Yeah, sort of. The marriage kind of killed any social life I could have had.

WON BICYCLETTE

Yeah I've heard of those.

IDENT MATH

See, the thing is, it wasn't one of those. It was something different. It's hard to explain.

WON BICYCLETTE

Do you want to... give it a shot?

IDENT MATH

No.

WON BICYCLETTE

Yeah, of course. Right.

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

That's not entirely true. I do want to talk about it. I'm sorry.

Are you? **WON BICYCLETTE**

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

I lied again.

WON BICYCLETTE

If I didn't know any better I'd say you knew what you were doing.

IDENT MATH

But you do know better, though.

WON BICYCLETTE

I'm not sure anymore. Can't put a finger on why I'm calling you.

IDENT MATH
Probably the same reason I'm talking to you.

Loneliness? WON BICYCLETTE

IDENT MATH

You weren't supposed to say it.

WON BICYCLETTE

Fuck, sorry. Talk about yourself before I say something else to mess this up.

IDENT MATH

I don't know where-

WON BICYCLETTE

Your husband. Your marriage, and you didn't do anything.

IDENT MATH

Right... um, well it happened years prior to the actual end of it. Have you ever lived in isolation and dwelled on certain truths?

WON BICYCLETTE
I've been too busy for my entire life.

IDENT MATH

Then I guess you can't relate. It drives you to do things.

WON BICYCLETTE

Okay...

IDENT MATH

My husband was a weatherman. He was the hot ticket when we were wed. And I guess it started with him... and travelled through the isolation to me.

WON BICYCLETTE

Okay... Um, sorry, what are we-

IDENT MATH

It's all part of the story, because – see, somewhere along the way he decided to work from home. After the first... I'd say quarter of our marriage, he was at home all the time, doing the weather reports from our living room, or bed or shower or something.

WON BICYCLETTE

That's... that's *pretty unbelievable*.

IDENT MATH

And I worked from home too, having been commissioned by a rich person to send irritating e-mails to other rich people. That was my job. I could do it anywhere but it... you know, why would you go out to do that?

WON BICYCLETTE

Of course.

IDENT MATH

So for that reason, we stopped going out. We didn't see our old friends and we didn't make new ones. All we had was each other...

WON BICYCLETTE

Well, that happens. Happens all the time, actually.

IDENT MATH

Yeah, I know. Liberty made me into God, A.

WON BICYCLETTE

What's that?

IDENT MATH

Isolation can drive anyone mad. It's really easy to lose your mind when you're cut off from the world.

(Pause.)

WON BICYCLETTE
(Contemplative.)

Hm.

IDENT MATH

I spent most of my time thinking. All of my time. I had sex and thought about complicated things.

WON BICYCLETTE
(Contemplative.)

Isolation does drive you crazy...

IDENT MATH

And so I started thinking about time and life. And I just got so inside of it, figuring it out, that it felt like I invented them. Like I had a stake in it through figuring it out.

WON BICYCLETTE

You figured out time?

IDENT MATH

I did. I figured out time and space and it was liberating. Time and knowledge thrive in captivity. Leads, uh... leads to that *liberation*.

WON BICYCLETTE

You like liberty, don't you?

IDENT MATH

I've come to learn that we... *liberated* people are the products of isolated thought.

WON BICYCLETTE

Wow, that's very interesting.

IDENT MATH

(Smiling.)
You're lying.

WON BICYCLETTE

No, no... No I agree with what you're saying. And it resonates with me in a weird way.

IDENT MATH

Now *that's* very interesting.

(Pause.)

WON BICYCLETTE

So; *God, A.*

IDENT MATH

Poetry thrives in captivity, too.

WON BICYCLETTE

I'll ask the wife if she has any sonnets in her.

ACT 2

Scene 7

(QUEEN POOL'S castle. MR. CORDIAL carries twin periscopes into QUEEN POOL'S room.)

MR. CORDIAL

The devices are ready, mum.

QUEEN 1
(Absent mindedly.)

Ah.

QUEEN 2

Oh Mr. Cordial, you spoil us.

QUEEN 1

Lovely.

QUEEN 2

Commence with the surgery, then.

MR. CORDIAL

(Steps towards the glass dome.)

I'm going to have to... come inside. To attach them.

(Pause.)

QUEEN 2

Let it be done, then. But be quick about it.

MR. CORDIAL

(Lowering head.)

Naturally.

(MR. CORDIAL walks around back and enters inside the glass dome. He leans the periscopes against the glass and removes a syringe from his belt.)

MR. CORDIAL

(Apologetic.)

It won't take more than 10 minutes.

QUEEN 1

Appropriate.

QUEEN 2

Be quick; our palette is showing fault lines.

(MR. CORDIAL grabs one of the periscopes and lays it beside the floor by QUEEN 1. He begins carving into her stomach with a syringe.)

MR. CORDIAL

I'm going to need you to be very still, mum. We run a very serious risk of impaling the children, especially at the beginning.

QUEEN 2

Oh we trust you and your steady hands, Mr. Cordial.

MR. CORDIAL

(Looks up.)

Before I progress, are you positive you want to do this?

QUEEN 1

In every sense of the feeling.

QUEEN 2

Our children deserve the best. They must be aware of their surroundings as soon as possible. Yes, Mr. Cordial, for the last innumerable time, we are certain.

MR. CORDIAL

(Lowering head.)

I understand.

(MR. CORDIAL begins cutting into QUEEN 1's belly with the syringe. He uses his other hand to part the flesh.)

MR. CORDIAL

So, what are your plans after the birth?

QUEEN 2

Whatever are you talking about now, Mr. Cordial?

MR. CORDIAL

Well, are you to remain with Mr. Bicyclette? Once he returns, I mean.

QUEEN 1

Ah!

QUEEN 2

Bite your tongue, sir!

MR. CORDIAL

My apologies. If I offended-

QUEEN 2

We will be doing no such thing.

(Pause.)

QUEEN 2 (contd.)

It's not appropriate for him to remain in office any longer.

MR. CORDIAL

I understand. What of the many suitors you have received favours from?

QUEEN 1

(Groaning.)

Aaaaaaaah...

QUEEN 2

(Chuckles.)

We are not interested in courtship, Mr. Cordial. I thought you knew that.

MR. CORDIAL

I... was not aware, no. It's been a long time since I heard you laugh.

(MR. CORDIAL attaches the first periscope to QUEEN 1's belly. He begins screwing it in.)

QUEEN 2

No, we are not interested in companionship with an inferior male. Mr. Bicyclette's insemination is adequate for the moment, but this is beyond him. This is beyond everyone.

MR. CORDIAL

Adequate for the moment? What is it that you mean?

QUEEN 2

You've become bold in your maturity, haven't you, Mr. Cordial?

MR. CORDIAL

A thousand apologies. I am merely... curious. For my patient; strictly professional. Your mental state will greatly affect-

QUEEN 1

(Pained.)

Ah!

MR. CORDIAL

Be still, mum!

QUEEN 2

Hmmmmmm. I am sure we could let Mr. Cordial know, couldn't we? He's been so faithful. And boldness is something we used to reward.

QUEEN 1

(Pants.)

Yessss...

MR. CORDIAL

(Leaning back.)

There, we're finished!

(Mr. CORDIAL stands to his feet and moves to QUEEN 2. He grabs the second periscope on his way.)

MR. CORDIAL

You were saying, mum?

(Mr. CORDIAL crouches down before QUEEN 2 and begins work.)

QUEEN 1

(Coldly.)

Hmmmm.

QUEEN 2

Well, Mr. Cordial, you must promise to keep this between the two of us.

MR. CORDIAL

Of course, mum. Two.

QUEEN 2

Do we have your word?

MR. CORDIAL

You've always had it.

(Pause.)

QUEEN 2

Mmmmmmmmmmm. We are not going to court those who sent us love letters. We are saving each and every one of them.

MR. CORDIAL
(Contemplative.)

Hm.

QUEEN 2

We are feeding them to crocodiles.

(MR. CORDIAL stops the surgery and looks up at QUEEN 2.)

MR. CORDIAL
Mum, if I may be bold again, why would you do that?

QUEEN 2
We are slowly training them to eat paper. They are nearly completely domesticated.

(Mr. CORDIAL pauses to meditate on the reply, and then resumes work.)

MR. CORDIAL
Is that so?

QUEEN 2
Yes, it is.

MR. CORDIAL
I suppose that answers my question.

QUEEN 2
You didn't ask us a question.

MR. CORDIAL
Oh...

(MR. CORDIAL grabs the periscope by the floor.)

QUEEN 2
Does this news trouble you, Mr. Cordial? Were you hoping to see us married to another?

MR. CORDIAL

No. Not especially... No.

QUEEN 2

Then why the solemn disposition?

QUEEN 1
(Giggling.)

Tee ha tee hee.

MR. CORDIAL
(Grimacing.)

It is nothing. I am just concentrating. Forgive my... tone. My tone of voice.

QUEEN 2

Ah, be careful, Mr. Cordial!

MR. CORDIAL

My apologies mum...

(Pause.)

MR. CORDIAL (Contd.)
(Stands up.)

It's finished.

QUEEN 2

That was faster than expected.

MR. CORDIAL

It's not a complicated job.

QUEEN 2

Mr. Cordial, I fear that you did not perform up to your impossibly high standards.

MR. CORDIAL

No, mum, it is perfect, and it works. It was very simple. You seem to forget that I am very good at what I do.

(MR. CORDIAL removes a tape player from his back pocket and presses the "play" button. A bizarre recording begins. MR.

CORDIAL points to the device and looks
intently at QUEEN POOL.)

MR. CORDIAL

They don't give these out for people with feet for hands, mum. I'm one of the best, and you know it.

QUEEN 2

I fear that your concentration is slipping, Mr. Cordial.

MR. CORDIAL

I assure you that it-

QUEEN 2

I promise you that you can be replaced if your work falls ill.

MR. CORDIAL
(Distantly.)

Am I that expendable?

QUEEN 2

You are.

QUEEN 1

Hm.

MR. CORDIAL
(Sharply.)

I'm well aware.

QUEEN 2
(Coldly.)

You are dismissed.

MR. CORDIAL

Mum.

(MR. CORDIAL bows slightly and exits.)

(End scene.)

ACT 2

Scene 8

(MR. CORDIAL returns to his laboratory. He presses “rewind” on the tape player. He grabs a long black extension cord and unplugs all devices attaches to it. He fashions it into a noose and tightens it. He presses “play” on the tape player.)

(End Scene.)

ACT III

Scene 1

(The Wall of Women; VERT SLUGLIPS' room and work area. NOISEWORTHY sits on the floor. VERT SLUGLIPS runs in, panicked.)

VERT SLUGLIPS
(Desperately.)

Noiseworthy!

NOISEWORTHY

Yes?

VERT SLUGLIPS
Your ideas! Why did you write those things?!

NOISEWORTHY

Whatever do you mean?

VERT SLUGLIPS

A massacre! All dead! One thousand people are dead!

NOISEWORTHY

You're not making any sense.

VERT SLUGLIPS

The Queen! Queen Pool, she read the address, and the crowd died. A thousand people turned on each other and started killing each other, and some of them dropped dead on the spot. Flames erupted out of nowhere! I was there! I saw it! It was *you*! It was what *you* wrote!

NOISEWORTHY

How are you so certain it was I that did this?

VERT SLUGLIPS

(Angry.)

This has never happened to me before! Nothing I have ever written has punched holes in reality! It must be you! It was the second paragraph that caused it!

NOISEWORTHY

You are a writer by trade. How did you not realize these things on your own?

VERT SLUGLIPS

(Taken aback.)

I-

NOISEWORTHY

I ran everything by you; I did nothing that did not meet your complete approval.

VERT SLUGLIPS

You...

NOISEWORTHY

An address that killed one thousand, then? Are they *all* dead, or are you just guessing?

VERT SLUGLIPS

(Panicked.)

Yes! She wants *me* dead, too! They're coming for me! Oh god, they're on their way! They're going to kill me! No, they're going to torture me! They'll take my eyes out! They're insane!

NOISEWORTHY

It's just too bad that you're the only one that can speak my language. I'd love to take full responsibility.

VERT SLUGLIPS

You have to tell them! You have to tell them what happened! That must have been what it was! Something in the translation. You're a snake, you don't know any better! You must be able to write something down or find some way to communicate.

NOISEWORTHY

Unfortunately I can't do that. And you know I can't.

VERT SLUGLIPS

What? No, you *have* to! I didn't want this to happen!

NOISEWORTHY

I'm a genius snake in title only, friend. I'm afraid that this is the end of us.

(NOISEWORTHY turns and slithers away.)

VERT SLUGLIPS

No! Wait you son of a bitch! Get back here!

NOISEWORTHY

There is much to do, old friend.

(NOISEWORTHY exits.)

(End scene.)

ACT III

Scene 2

(QUEEN POOL'S room. WON BICYCLETTE runs in.)

WON BICYCLETTE
(Urgently.)

What in the *hell* is going on?

Abysmal!

QUEEN 1

Look! It's-

QUEEN 2

(QUEEN POOL gestures upward towards the hanging corpse of
MR. CORDIAL.)

WON BICYCLETTE

What? I got a call saying you were going into premature labour and nobody's looked me in the face since I touched down!

QUEEN 1

Inerrant!

WON BICYCLETTE

Do you know how many laws of reality I broke to get back here as fast as I did? Do you know how many repercussions will be felt for the following millennia?! People are going to be born as quasars!

QUEEN 2

This is more important!

(WON BICYCLETTE paces the room in such a way to calm his nerves.)

WON BICYCLETTE

So, what, he hung himself in front of you?

QUEEN 2

No we had him brought in here! We had to be sure you would see it!

WON BICYCLETTE

(Angry.)

Ah , you've gone retarded with pregnancy. What did you say to him?

QUEEN 2

I said nothing!

WON BICYCLETTE

I don't believe that.

(WON BICYCLETTE approaches the hanging body.)

WON BICYCLETTE

How long has he been hanging here?

QUEEN 2

I have no idea! Someone found him when I came back from the address! We sent him off after he performed our surgery. It was his reward time.

WON BICYCLETTE

Right; the address. I'd ask how it went but even in my drug induced stupor I was stricken by its infamy, preconceived.

QUEEN 2

What am I supposed to do? It's all ruined. Whatever will I do?

WON BICYCLETTE

Nobody worth a damn would have attended the address anyway. It's worms-

QUEEN 2
(Screaming.)

No! I mean the birth! Who will give birth to the Boys Diabolik?!

WON BICYCLETTE

Calm down. We can find someone. We still have a day or two, maybe three-

QUEEN 1

Misery!

QUEEN 2

No! It won't work! He was the best! He was the only one capable!

WON BICYCLETTE

Surely there must be-

QUEEN 2

No! Only he understands the surgery involved!

WON BICYCLETTE

Look, I just got back, I've been working nonstop since I got on my ship, I didn't even get to *meet* with anyone, can you just let me -

QUEEN 2
(Angry.)

Only he knows how to birth two halves of one child and combine them! Don't you *dare* for one moment think that you know more about this than me! You have no idea how complicated this birth is! He had to research and prepare special instruments that I am sure only he can use! And now he is dead!

WON BICYCLETTE

Right, I know. I understand that. Just... try to remain positive.

QUEEN 2

(Panicked.)

You see? *Do you see?* Do you understand that my children are as good as dead?

WON BICYCLETTE

I do. I'm going to look into it. Just stay calm until I get back.

QUEEN 2

You can leave. I will confer with my children and convince them to delay the birth. I can feel them distressed. Your presence makes me stressed and I must keep a calm head.

WON BICYCLETTE

I find that obtusely disgusting.

QUEEN 2

They are very easily displeased.

WON BICYCLETTE

(Sarcastically.)

Lovely. It's all sorted out then. Glad I could be of service.

(WON BICYCLETTE turns away from QUEEN POOL to leave.)

WON BICYCLETTE

Rotten luck about the speech, though. It's the kind of press you don't need.

(QUEEN 2 leans up against the glass, staring off into space.)

QUEEN 2

(Distantly.)

I am going to have to issue bulldozers to clear the streets. They are stacked tall with flesh and pus and bones and fire... The fire is stacked so high.

WON BICYCLETTE

So, if that's it, I'm going to be leaving for the Free World again in the morning. I will be gone for one and one half weeks. You should really pursue the one responsible for that speech in the meantime. I'll keep in touch.

(QUEEN 2 slowly turns her head towards WON BICYCLETTE,
breathing heavy.)

QUEEN 2

How do you know I did not write it?

WON BICYCLETTE

Because you're pretty much useless.

(WON BICYCLETTE begins stepping slowly away.)

WON BICYCLETTE

You couldn't even write a convincing coup on your own.

QUEEN 1

You never called us while you were away.

WON BICYCLETTE

I'm really impressed you noticed. Don't worry, after the children are born and we remain married and you don't change anything significant, we'll have plenty of time to talk. Maybe we can even renew our vows.

QUEEN 2
(Offended.)

What?

QUEEN 1

Are you trying to play something?

WON BICYCLETTE

No, I didn't get a doctorate in the form of a song. I've got nothing to play. I've just got to go and call my new friend. She's really nice. Seriously though, I love our talks.

(WON BICYCLETTE exits.)

(Pause.)

(QUEEN POOL screams at the top of her lungs at the hanging corpse of MR. CORDIAL.)

(End scene.)

ACT III

Scene 3

(The traveling house. IDENT MATH sits on the couch with her head relaxed back. CATHARSIS RAT sits with hat in tow on the loveseat.)

IDENT MATH

I wonder what they're doing to him.

CATHARSIS RAT

Do you want me to tell you?

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

Do you think I'd like it?

CATHARSIS RAT

So far, yes.

IDENT MATH

I don't even know what that's supposed to mean.

CATHARSIS RAT

Absolutely.

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

How long have we been on the road?

CATHARSIS RAT

24 hours, approximately. But maybe more.

IDENT MATH

How is it that it is still daylight? Or am I just going insane?

CATHARSIS RAT

Do you really want to know?

IDENT MATH

I would love nothing more.

CATHARSIS RAT

It is perpetual daylight here. I suppose you have not looked at the sun, and you shouldn't. I would not suggest walking outside unless coated in a thin hallucinogenic paste.

IDENT MATH

And you have to keep going.

CATHARSIS RAT

The sun is hot enough to evaporate you. Very few people venture outside in this country. Those who do must coat themselves in a toxic film. I could smell it on Bend and his cronies. Did you not notice it?

IDENT MATH

No. Why's it toxic?

CATHARSIS RAT

Yes. To protect from predators. More like poison.

IDENT MATH

Tell me a story about that, then.

CATHARSIS RAT

Giant taloned fabric men stalk these lands, or so the stories say. And that what hunts non visible. They might be the same thing. Maybe.

IDENT MATH

And what do you say?

CATHARSIS RAT

I say what everyone else says.

IDENT MATH

Even liars?

CATHARSIS RAT

No, not liars. Anything but that.

IDENT MATH

So do the fabric people hunt humans exclusively? Is that where we are with this?

CATHARSIS RAT

Yes. Those who have been here since the beginning have evolved defensive mechanisms.

IDENT MATH

Swords?

CATHARSIS RAT

No.

IDENT MATH

I was being funny.

CATHARSIS RAT

No.

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH
(Rubbing her face.)

So...

CATHARSIS RAT
Queen Pool has long hair that secretes poison.

IDENT MATH
Wow, that's stupidly useless.

CATHARSIS RAT
It is, but it is very hazardous. The most dangerous poison in the world some say.

IDENT MATH
What do you say?

CATHARSIS RAT
I say I've never sampled it. That would be uselessly stupid.

(IDENT MATH sits up sharply.)

IDENT MATH
And so...

(Pause.)

CATHARSIS RAT
I suppose I can't say conclusively.

IDENT MATH
(Wide eyed.)

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOH!

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH
This is a big deal!

(IDENT MATH falls back down on the couch.)

IDENT MATH
Is there a large market for that?

CATHARSIS RAT

No. There is not.

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

How is it that you can have absolute knowledge but have no answers? Are you completely retardant?

CATHARSIS RAT

I should think not!

(IDENT MATH stretches her arms up and slides further back.)

IDENT MATH

I suppose you wouldn't know, in any event. *Either way.*

CATHARSIS RAT

Woman, you cut to the core of me.

(Pause.)

CATHARSIS RAT

Although sometimes I claim ignorance for the sake of conversation or friendship.

IDENT MATH

Oh yeah, yeah really, yeah?

CATHARSIS RAT

It is.

IDENT MATH

And why's that?

CATHARSIS RAT

Otherwise nobody talk to me.

IDENT MATH

You're so damned precious!

CATHARSIS RAT

Do not insult me. The solution to my problem lies with you people. You unmathematicians.

IDENT MATH

Even the mathematicians?

CATHARSIS RAT

Especially so!

(IDENT MATH stands up and walks over to the table. She sits on the top of it. She exhales deeply and looks out the window.)

CATHARSIS RAT

So, what was your husband's name?

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

Roy.

CATHARSIS RAT

No it wasn't.

IDENT MATH

His name was forgotten in the ether. It happened because it doesn't matter.

CATHARSIS RAT

Alright. How was it that he died?

IDENT MATH

He's not dead.

CATHARSIS RAT

He's not dead.

IDENT MATH

I already talked to Won about this.

CATHARSIS RAT

Won as in Bicyclette? As the most infuriating name ever to touch reality to tongue?

IDENT MATH

Yeah. But you know that.

CATHARSIS RAT

I just need to express how much I hate his name! So says the Catharsis Rat!

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

There's nothing left to say. I didn't even want to say it the first time. I feel really dirty after taking about this stuff.

CATHARSIS RAT

You seemed to enjoy yourself.

IDENT MATH

Yeah because it feels good to talk but I always regret it. I've never even seen this person, and I'm explaining about how I used to live in a coma of self awareness.

CATHARSIS RAT

Your body is trying to tell you things. Through yourself, using your face and vocabulary.

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

Okay, you know what? There's nothing even to say. I'm talked out. I can't explain anything anymore. I can never bring myself to lay something out for someone or tell a story about myself or fucking... try and convince someone of an opinion I hold. I don't know why people do it, and my *body* makes me feel shitty afterwards.

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

(Angry.)

Clichés exist in real life, right, and so does comedy, and the things you hate to watch people say. And I can't get into why that shouldn't happen. It's a form of inbred recycling and I spent too long figuring the world out, and I am God, A, that *other me*, cause I spent *such a long time* cutting myself in half so that I only have myself to impress, and I already know everything that is going to happen, so I don't need to do anything, *ever*.

(Pause.)

CATHARSIS RAT

How do you know what's going to happen?

(Pause.)

CATHARSIS RAT

Don't make me beg.

IDENT MATH

Because sometimes I flirt with people. And because of this I became... privy to certain things from the driver before we left. After he recorded his tape. He lives up there in the future and he told me everything that was going to happen. So I'm not *really* surprised.

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

It's still weird to see a rat like you carrying a witch hat around like a hermit crab.

(Pause.)

CATHARSIS RAT

I am not your jury.

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

And I can understand why you might be threatened by knowledge of the future.

(Pause.)

CATHARSIS RAT

Madam, beings have altered states.

IDENT MATH

But I did it in a new way. I did something different.

CATHARSIS RAT

And look at you now.

(End scene.)

ACT III

Scene 4

(Underground. The AMBASSADOR leads the Thought Police underground to find the Watercooler Mob.)

BEND

How much further?

AMBASSADOR

If you want to bring your ridiculous weirdo train in-

BEND

I have no doubt we could find our way from here if you want to get sassy.

AMBASSADOR

It is not verbal jousting; you just keep falling on my sword. Ah - Yar yar yar.

BEND

Look here, the only reason -

AMBASSADOR

Stop.

(BEND and the other Thought Police members stop in their tracks.)

AMBASSADOR
(Distantly.)

They're up and around. Here.

THOUGHT POLICE MEMBER 1

I neglected to ask this earlier, but how do we know he is being truthful?

BEND

What do you mean?

AMBASSADOR
(Screams.)

Whisper!!!

THOUGHT POLICE MEMBER
(Whispering.)

He could be leading us into a trap.

BEND

Our victory is in his favour. We're the only ones keeping him safe down here.

AMBASSADOR
(Shouting.)

True!

GASOLINE SEVEN POINT THREE
(Voice.)

GO!!!

(A shower of rocks rains down on the Thought Police. The THOUGHT POLICE roll marbles on the ground and unsheathe their spears in vain. Rocks bounce off their backs and bash their heads. BEND, the only one remaining, is choked to the ground.)

GASOLINE SEVEN POINT THREE
(Shouting.)

Death to the theocracy!

BEND
(Shouting.)

More spit on your rebellion!

GASOLINE SEVEN POINT THREE
That sounds like a challenge! A challenge down here in *my house!*

(BEND pulls at the invisible hands on his neck, but to no avail.)

BEND
Struggling.)

I have... somebody... want.

GASOLINE SEVEN POINT THEEE
Well that would be *very* fortunate for you.

BEND
(Struggling.)

Kinder...Kan...

(Pause.)

GASOLINE SEVEN POINT THREE
Ninety Nine point Six?!

BEND
Yes... He's here...

GASOLINE SEVEN POINT THREE
Well where is he?

(BEND struggles against the pressure on his neck and looks behind him, puzzled.)

BEND
Back... back there!

GASOLINE SEVEN POINT THREE

Just because we are non-visibles does not mean we cannot see each other, you son of a bitch!

BEND

Wh... *what?!*

GASOLINE SEVEN POINT THREE

Your Queen sends a - a few people to take on out *whole stronghold?!*

BEND gurgles and chokes.

GASOLINE SEVEN POINT THREE

Or was this *your* idea?

BEND
(Choking.)

He... is *here... let me go...*

GASOLINE SEVEN POINT THREE

Even in death.

(BEND'S neck bends backwards and he falls to the ground, dead.)

GASOLINE SEVEN POINT THREE

Take him back to the boxcars. We'll hold his body for ransom. Do something to make it look like he's alive.

(End scene.)

ACT III

Scene 5

(QUEEN POOL'S castle. QUEEN POOL stands alone
in her glass dome.)

QUEEN 2

If necessary, seduce the mailman and acquire more materials.

QUEEN 1

Sssssscandal.

QUEEN 2

I am not concerned with you ability to handle the extra workload.

QUEEN 1

Hm.

QUEEN 2

The training of the beasts of burden is just about done, they're telling me. They're using bigger words, and I can scarcely interpret them.

QUEEN 1

Truly.

QUEEN 2

I fear that the childbirth will be the end of us.

QUEEN 1

Good.

QUEEN 2

Whatever will we do about it?

(Pause.)

QUEEN 1

Prepare.

QUEEN 2

Yes!

(QUEEN 2 leans herself against the dome, looking away from QUEEN 1.)

QUEEN 2

Seduce the mailman to put the exclamation point at the end of Phase 1. Use the remains of the Parlour stockpile to feed the circling birds of prey, but later. We'll starve them for one and one half weeks, and then send it out. Tarry on the piles of dead.

QUEEN 1

Yes, alright?

QUEEN 2

Do you have any doubts?

QUEEN 1

Hm.

QUEEN 2
You need to not elaborate, I think...

QUEEN 1
(Sneering.)
Bicyclette.

QUEEN 2
Once we take his cities he will be stripped of power and the desire for life.

QUEEN 1
Yes?

QUEEN 2
His egotism, it scrapes at us, do you agree?

QUEEN 1
Doubtless.

(QUEEN 2 pushes herself up off the glass and takes 3 steps back.)

QUEEN 2
Sometimes it is impossible to bear. He talks to us like we don't know everything/

QUEEN 1
Truly.

QUEEN 2
How fantastic it will be to feast upon him before the toppling of the monuments of history. Eat him like the birds. If we still exist. If we exist, if we have mouths. If we have the same forms.

(Pause.)

QUEEN 2
Can you see it?

QUEEN 1
Gorrible.

QUEEN 2
(Looks up.)

How to mark the occasion, do you wonder?

(Pause.)

QUEEN 1

Sluglips.

(Pause.)

QUEEN 2

Lick the messenger and see that he promises that the dawn of Phase 2 will be marked by the falling of Vert Sluglips' severed head. He should not be excommunicated by his alleged misery.

QUEEN 1

Hm.

QUEEN 2

Make love to him.

QUEEN 1

Yes.

QUEEN 2

Make him bleed.

QUEEN 1

Yes.

QUEEN 2

We need more, though. We need flesh for the cannon. More bodies. More blood. More sadness piled high like snow capped mountains.

QUEEN 1

Slave.

QUEEN 2

Our children will need to eat more than anyone. More than us. They will *eat us*. Feed Bicyclette properly in the days leading up to his suicide on the grounds of efficiency.

QUEEN 1

Yes.

QUEEN 2

Have Mr. Cordial's corpse thawed for the second day. Stuff him with inferior food.

QUEEN 1

You.

QUEEN 2

I will make Mr. Cordial's corpse thawed for the second day.

QUEEN 1

Have the alpha males arrive at the castle.

QUEEN 2

Yes.

QUEEN 1

Bicyclette to complete year one, *the day of*.

QUEEN 2

Hm.

QUEEN 1

Year two will see Fabrican't disappeared, *the day of*.

QUEEN 2

Yes.

QUEEN 1

Send for the alpha males today. Send for Mr. Cordial's body to be heated. Now. I will see to it that the beasts of burden are taken care for. Later.

QUEEN 2

Finished?

QUEEN 1

Commit it to memory.

(Pause.)

QUEEN 2

Positive?

QUEEN 1

Errors?

QUEEN 2

No.

QUEEN 1

Commit it to memory. There is no time to double check or manipulate. This is the entirety of the plot.

(Pause.)

QUEEN 2

Finished.

QUEEN 1

We are becoming tired. Call the barber.

QUEEN 2

He is being summoned.

QUEEN 1

Yes.

(End Scene.)

ACT IV

Scene 1

(WON BICYCLETTE'S airship office. WON BICYCLETTE sits at his familiar table, studying documents. The phone rings.)

WON BICYCLETTE
Hello?

OFFICER
Mr. Bicyclette, we've received troubling news regarding Officer Bend.

WON BICYCLETTE
Alright.

OFFICER

Would you like to hear it, sir?

(Pause.)

WON BICYCLETTE

Are you new?

OFFICER

No, sir. Sorry. I was told to... Sorry, nevermind.

WON BICYCLETTE

Don't worry about it. Just tell me what's going on.

OFFICER

We've received a ransom telegram from the Watercooler Mob saying they've captured Officer Bend and they're demanding a ransom.

WON BICYCLETTE

What do they want?

OFFICER

They didn't say.

WON BICYCLETTE

So they... just want some hypothetical ransom.

OFFICER

It would appear that way, yes.

WON BICYCLETTE

Did they give details on how to reach them?

OFFICER

They did not, sir.

WON BICYCLETTE

Alright, that makes sense. I don't know why I expected anything different. You ever sat in one place for too long?

OFFICER

Sir?

WON BICYCLETTE

Drives you crazy. I have no reason to doubt that they've gone mad in isolation. How long's it been? 5 years?

OFFICER

Around that, sir.

WON BICYCLETTE

The theory fits. Regardless of all of that, I'm next to certain he's dead, and since they never come out, he would have to had been down there, and since I gave no orders, then he must have been up to something.

OFFICER

Do you think he was guilty of some sort of treason?

(Pause.)

WON BICYCLETTE

I'm sorry, were you talking to me? I got confused because I didn't hear my name.

OFFICER

Oh, I-I'm sorry, sir.

WON BICYCLETTE

It's alright; don't cry about it. Treason; yes, probably. So at the end of it, this whole problem has solved itself. But, listen; I have a task for you. Find your supervisor and assemble a team. Six or seven people. Take some of the... uh... the *tongue hounds*.

OFFICER

The Alcohounds?

WON BICYCLETTE

Yes, those. Take a couple of those and search the area surrounding the entrance to their hideout. I think Bend was up to something concerning the former ambassador. If that's the case he'll be wandering around the area.

OFFICER

What should we do when we find him?

WON BICYCLETTE

Your supervisor is going to want to detain him, but don't let him. Just find him and make sure he's alright. I made a promise that he wouldn't fall into the wrong hands and I intend on holding true to it. I'm that sort of man.

OFFICER

Yes, sir.

WON BICYCLETTE

Oh, and put someone by the telegram machine to await further instructions. I think they were just trying to get to me, but if they get stupider they might betray their safety. Is that clear?

OFFICER

Yes, sir.

WON BICYCLETTE

Fantastic. Call me if there are any further complications.

OFFICER

Yes, Mr. Bicycleette.

WON BICYCLETTE

Goodbye.

(WON BICYCLETTE hangs up the phone.)

(End Scene.)

ACT IV

Scene 2

(Exterior courtyard; the chopping block. VERT SLUGLIPS is awaiting execution. He is accompanied by 2 Thought Police OFFICERS.)

VERT SLUGLIPS

This is a vulgar display of stupidity!

OFFICER 1

That's what they all say! *Just like that!*

VERT SLUGLIPS

They do not!

(Pause.)

OFFICER 2

He's right, god damn it!

OFFICER 1

Hey, what are you, some sort of *collage boy*?!

VERT SLUGLIPS

Collage boy, I am a *college* boy! And no I am not! I was given to a gypsy man to be taught my craft.

OFFICER 2

Spare us your life story!

VERT SLUGLIPS

Your behavior confuses me!

(OFFICER 1 beats VERT SLUGLIPS over the back with his forearm.)

OFFICER 1

Don't judge us! You can't judge us! You're an artist! *Where are your boots?*!

VERT SLUGLIPS

It was Noiseworthy! He wrote the parts that killed everyone! He started the fires! He's the one responsible for everything!

OFFICER 2

Yeah, yeah, save it for the axe and then Satan and then death.

VERT SLUGLIPS

I'm agnostic!

(OFFICER 1 and OFFICER 2 look at each other.)

OFFICER 1

That's not even a word!

VERT SLUGLIPS

Yes it is! It means I don't believe that man can really believe in god.

(OFFICER 2 grips his head in pain, like something is trying to burst out.)

OFFICER 2
(Agonized.)

Get out of my head!

OFFICER 1

No, that doesn't make sense.

VERT SLUGLIPS

That's what I believe! It's true!

OFFICER 2
(Agonized.)

God it hurts so bad!

OFFICER 1

Got some kind of post modernist over here. What else do you believe in?

(Pause.)

VERT SLUGLIPS

I believe in limitations. I believe in...

(Pause.)

VERT SLUGLIPS (contd.)

Honey sandwiches, and cardigans. And writers.

(OFFICER 2 removes his hands from his head, breathing heavily.)

OFFICER 2

No, *no no*, hold on; I don't own a sweater.

(Pause)

VERT SLUGLIPS
You don't know what you're missing.

OFFICER 2

I like blue.

VERT SLUGLIPS

(Pointing.)

That's a good first step. Now all we need is a pattern. You look like a checker man to me.

(OFFICER 3 bursts onto the scene in a panic.)

OFFICER 3

Does one of you know how to sew?!

OFFICER 1

(Defiant.)

What?!

OFFICER 3

Sew! Do you know how to sew! Like thread and needle!

OFFICER 2

Why?

OFFICER 3

The queen! She's giving birth! She needs somebody who can sew!

OFFICER 2

Why?!

OFFICER 3

I don't know! I don't fucking know, she just said everyone get up there and get it under control.

OFFICER 1

Get what under control?!

OFFICER 3

Just hurry! She's freaking the fuck out!

OFFICER 1

Fuck!

(ALL 3 OFFICERS exit. VERT SLUGLIPS is left alone. He looks up at the sky.)

VERT SLUGLIPS

I would have gladly traded my life from this point on for the ability to write fantastically. And that ship has sailed.

(VERT SLUGLIPS looks down towards the floor.)

VERT SLUGLIPS

You could have made a better offer. I'm insecure and have a weak constitution.

(VERT SLUGLIPS looks forward at the fourth wall.)

VERT SLUGLIPS

You could have read my articles!

(VERT SLUGLIPS exits.)

(End scene.)

ACT IV

Scene 3

(The Travelling House. IDENT MATH sits at a table playing solitaire. CATHARSIS RAT is on the other end of the tabletop, beside the telephone.)

CATHARSIS RAT

So I hear you flirted with the driver to get information.

IDENT MATH

Have you been repeating that in your head this whole time?

CATHARSIS RAT

I've been *screaming* it!

IDENT MATH

Well, if it's any consolation, I didn't hear anything good.

CATHARSIS RAT

You're smart enough to have anticipated that before you asked! Unless he told you everything there is to know.

IDENT MATH

No, nothing like that. Just more useless knowledge. Nothing I can use.

CATHARSIS RAT

You can use any knowledge if you have the tools.

IDENT MATH

Yeah, well, maybe that's my problem. There's nothing I can do with it with the exception of not being surprised. Just like before, just like it's always been.

CATHARSIS RAT

What occurred to make you so passive? Were you always like this?

IDENT MATH

You sound genuinely interested. Which should be impossible.

CATHARSIS RAT

It's all part of the plan, *God, A.*

IDENT MATH

I only said that... it was an example, I don't think like that anymore.

CATHARSIS RAT

But it's still important. You still think about it. All those things you thought of.

(IDENT MATH tosses her card on the table
and sits back in her chair, frustrated.)

IDENT MATH

No, it's not, because I've ended up on a truck where everyone knows what's going to happen, but nobody cares, and everyone's pretending like they don't.

CATHARSIS RAT

I'm not pretending!

IDENT MATH

I know I was making a point!

CATHARSIS RAT

I know I just proved a point too!

IDENT MATH

And the futility proves my point!

CATHARSIS RAT

Well we've both proven our points, then!

IDENT MATH

Yeah I know!

(The phone rings. IDENT MATH reaches over and answers it.)

IDENT MATH

Who else has this number?

WON BICYCLETTE

Nobody.

IDENT MATH

That's right!

WON BICYCLETTE

Listen, there was some sort of event concerning the Ambassador. Do me a favour; if he shows up again, get in touch with me, or let him know that nobody on my end is trying to kill him.

IDENT MATH

What happened?

WON BICYCLETTE

Well Bend was captured, but I'm pretty sure he's dead, and I'm absolutely sure I don't care. I think the Ambassador escaped and is wandering around Fabrican't somewhere. He knows how dangerous it is so he might try to get in contact with you again.

IDENT MATH

I don't know if he can climb aboard a moving truck a second time.

WON BICYCLETTE

From what I understand, he's really cool.

IDENT MATH

Well I don't know about that.

CATHARSIS RAT

Ha ha! I'm laughing at something in the future! It's clever!

WON BICYCLETTE

Things are getting a little out of hand over at the government, so the sooner you get out of the country, the better.

IDENT MATH

If you didn't want to talk to me anymore, you can just say so.

WON BICYCLETTE

What? No, it's not that. Not that at all. What?

IDENT MATH

I'm just messing with you.

WON BICYCLETTE

I know!

IDENT MATH

Everyone over here knows, too.

WON BICYCLETTE

Then we all know!

IDENT MATH

I know!

CATHARSIS RAT

See?! Do you see?! It wasn't really funny though!

WON BICYCLETTE

Who's that?

IDENT MATH

A rat in a hat.

WON BICYCLETTE

Great, listen, I'm in this really great airship, and I was thinking that once you get settled with your house and this and that, maybe I could abscond with you somewhere?

IDENT MATH

Well I've never been absconded before.

WON BICYCLETTE

Only very rich people can abscond. You must try to imagine how rich I am.

IDENT MATH

Money doesn't really mean anything to me.

WON BICYCLETTE

Me neither, but you must understand that it means everything to everybody else.

IDENT MATH

That's... stunningly provocative.

WON BICYCLETTE

I'm full of surprises. And you haven't answered my question yet.

IDENT MATH

If I am in favour of you stealing me away? I didn't know I had a choice.

WON BICYCLETTE

You don't, but I am choosing to be a gentleman.

IDENT MATH

Then... sure, yes. I'd like that.

(Pause.)

CATHARSIS RAT
(Shouting.)

CLOSE THE DEAL!

IDENT MATH

So, Mr. Bicycleette, you do realize that I know next to nothing about you.

WON BICYCLETTE

Isn't that something?

IDENT MATH

It is. If we're really supposed to be getting to know each other, this seems pretty one sided.

WON BICYCLETTE

I suppose you're right. What do you want to know?

IDENT MATH

What do you think I should know?

WON BICYCLETTE

Okay, that's how it's going to be then...

(Pause.)

WON BICYCLETTE (cont'd.)

Well, to start, I'm very old.

IDENT MATH

How old?

WON BICYCLETTE

Let me finish my thought!

IDENT MATH

Sorry.

WON BICYCLETTE

Several trillion years old, maybe. I've lost count. I was here at the beginning, though.

(Pause.)

WON BICYCLETTE

You can ask your follow up now.

IDENT MATH

Did you create the universe?

WON BICYCLETTE

Not really. I've been telling people I did, but no. I'd have no say in that. I don't know how anyone could be responsible for that.

IDENT MATH

They said you did it so that real estate could exist so you could own everything.

WON BICYCLETTE

Even though that's a funny notion, no; I wish that were the case, though. I wish I had that sort of power.

IDENT MATH

Then how come you own everything?

WON BICYCLETTE

That's a good question.

(Pause.)

WON BICYCLETTE (Cont'd.)

It wasn't my idea, really. I never came up with the idea of control, but it seemed important to everyone I was around, and since I already had the most invested in everything, I seemed to be the man for the job.

IDENT MATH

So owning everything...

WON BICYCLETTE

Up until recently it was for Queen Pool. She's older than people think. She thought it was very important to buy up all the real estate, just to keep an eye on everything. She's got some sort of plan that I can't be bothered with. Nothing will come of it.

IDENT MATH

Are you one of those people who knows everything?

WON BICYCLETTE

No, no I've just seen so many things happen that I know when something is just running its course. It's a very *familiar* course.

IDENT MATH

With all that experience you could change things, though.

WON BICYCLETTE

Is that how it works for you?

(Pause.)

WON BICYCLETTE

Because I would assume you know how knowledge and experience make the world go round.

IDENT MATH

Alright, sorry.

WON BICYCLETTE

No, it's just...

(Pause.)

WON BICYCLETTE (cont'd.)

I've been here so long, and I've become so integrated with the simple passage of time, that I'm just scenery now. I can't actually affect anything, or change anything. I can participate in these cycles, because that will happen inevitably, but without these... abstract things that drive people to aspire to better things, it's like being an ocean.

IDENT MATH

So why do you even want to get married? Or buy all this property or do anything?

(Pause.)

WON BICYCLETTE

I guess...

(Pause.)

WON BICYCLETTE (cont'd)

Like I said, some things just work in cycles. And there's no way to escape it. I mean, you could try, but... down that way madness lies.

IDENT MATH

Maybe that's a good thing.

WON BICYCLETTE

Maybe. Maybe you do that because you have that stuff that can affect things. But I'm not the person for that, and I've come to terms with that. Nature doesn't get a say, and it doesn't get revenge, and it doesn't attain any absolution.

IDENT MATH

So are you Mother Nature, then?

WON BICYCLETTE

(Smiling.)

I would love if I were mother nature. No, no I'm just a... missing link.

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

Between what?

WON BICYCLETTE

Here and there.

(End Scene.)

ACT IV

Scene 4

(QUEEN POOL'S room. Several OFFICERS are present. QUEEN POOL is on her knees, hunched over in pain.)

QUEEN 1

Let them be! Do not harm them! Do not put your filthy hands upon them!

OFFICER 1

What will you have us do, mum?!

QUEEN 2
(Screaming.)

Back!

QUEEN 1
Stay back! No matter what happens do not interfere!

QUEEN 2
(Shouting.)

Bend!

QUEEN 1
Send for Bend! Get him in here!

OFFICER 2
He has not made contact since he landed at the traveling house!

QUEEN 2
What?!

QUEEN 1
He was not assigned to any traveling house!

OFFICER 2
Mr. Bicyclette must have sent him!

(QUEEN POOL screams at the top of her lungs. She grips her stomach. Blood begins to spill out from her bellies.)

OFFICER 1
Your highness!

QUEEN 2
NO!

QUEEN 1
Stay back! This is how it has to be! Clear the room!

QUEEN 2
None will be spared!

Go!

QUEEN 1

(Pause.)

NOW!

QUEEN 1

(OFFICERS exit.)

QUEEN 2

Please! Not now! It is too soon! Preparations have not – *Aaaaaaaah!*

QUEEN 1

(Screaming.)

Nothing's finished!

(QUEEN POOL collapses forward and lies on the ground.)

QUEEN 1

No...

QUEEN 2

Not now...

(QUEEN POOL dies.)

(Pause.)

NOISEWORTHY

(Voice.)

She's so radiant.

(NOISEWORTHY enters.)

NOISEWORTHY

They look just like their mum.

(Blood begins to pool beneath the corpses of QUEEN POOL.
NOISEWORTHY slithers through it.)

NOISEWORTHY

This is what you get for keeping up appearances.

(NOISEWORTHY wriggles around behind the dome and enters.)

NOISEWORTHY

Hello boys, I'm your uncle Noiseworthy. Give us a kiss.

(NOISEWORTHY slithers towards the corpse of QUEEN 2)

(End scene.)

ACT IV

Scene 5

(QUEEN POOL'S room. VERT SLUGLIPS runs in and encounters a bloated NOISEWORTHY.)

VERT SLUGLIPS
(Angry shout.)

Noiseworthy!

(NOISEWORTHY turns to VERT SLUGLIPS, startled.)

NOISEWORTHY

I am impressed!

VERT SLUGLIPS

You've... eaten the queen!

NOISEWORTHY

I have absorbed the powers, which fought to be released from her pitifully mad form. Forms, plural, rather.

VERT SLUGLIPS

What the hell have you been doing? What is your plan? To have me killed so you could eat her?

NOISEWORTHY

Why don't you write a story about it?

VERT SLUGLIPS

I was the only one that could speak your language! I was your friend! You need me!

NOISEWORTHY

Did you know that Queen Pool has no innards? It's all jungle. It's all vines and leaves. It's like it was meant to be. I'm a vegan, you understand. My conscience is clean. It's a good day!

VERT SLUGLIPS

You're out of your mind! You tried to have me killed so you could devour a pregnant woman.

NOISEWORTHY

They were green, did you know that? They had eyes like cats.

VERT SLUGLIPS

You're not going to get away with this. You're not going to take this any further, wherever you were intending to go from here.

NOISEWORTHY

Why not? She put everything in place. All I need to do is alter what plans she was able to set in motion. Or, rather, just let it go as far as it can. Instead of destroying all recorded history I destroy all recorded history and then eat all that remains.

VERT SLUGLIPS

They called you a genius snake.

NOISEWORTHY

A pitifully awful writer such as yourself must be able to appreciate the theatric merit of this.

(NOISEWORTHY writhes around and makes struggling noises.)

NOISEWORTHY

They must not be fully digested yet. Once I've absorbed their powers it should be as smooth as spaghetti. At this rate it'll all be set in fifteen minutes. You can stick around and watch. I don't want to spoil the surprise.

(VERT SLUGLIPS walks towards the dome.)

NOISEWORTHY

And since you escaped the distraction like I knew you would – what are you doing?

(VERT SLUGLIPS enters the dome and places his hand on NOISEWORTHY.)

NOISEWORTHY

What are you doing? I was going to say- don't hold me by my head!

(VERT SLUGLIPS drags NOISEWORTHY out of the dome.)

NOISEWORTHY

I was saying that you can be my scribe! You're the only one that understands me! I need you all of a sudden! I knew you wouldn't be killed! I timed it as such! I just needed a distraction! Listen to me!

(VERT SLUGLIPS handles a long velvet rope that governs the blinds on her balcony doors. He walks over towards NOISEWORTHY, but does a double take, walks back to the doors, and throws them open, casting light into the room.)

NOISEWORTHY

No... *stop!* I'm the only one fit to rule! She was insane and you know it!

VERT SLUGLIPS

I know the story about the Boys Diabolik. I know every story. Don't lie to me anymore.

NOISEWORTHY

If you release me I will detail my plan and you'll see-

VERT SLUGLIPS

You never believed in my writing, or me, or anything.

NOISEWORTHY

It... has room for improvement. And you have room to grow. But that is what we-

(VERT SLUGLIPS shoves NOISEWORTHY out onto the balcony.
NOISEWORTHY incinerates in the sun.)

NOISEWORTHY
(Screams.)

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!

(NOISEWORTHY'S screams die. VERT SLUGLIPS turns and walks
away.)

VERT SLUGLIPS
My stories only killed boring people.

(VERT SLUGLIPS exits.)

(End scene.)

ACT IV

Scene 6

(Leatherbound; outside Fabrican't. Exterior of the traveling house. IDENT MATH stands on the porch of another house with CATHARSIS RAT. She knocks 3 times.)

IDENT MATH

I do.

CATHARSIS RAT

I am well aware.

IDENT MATH

Don't say anything.

CATHARSIS RAT

I'm just a little confused.

(A woman with no face, EXCLIMATION POINT, answers the door.)

IDENT MATH

Is your name exclamation point?

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

My husband's name was lost in the abyss, but you knew him, didn't you? I'm sure you've seen my picture.

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

I mean, if I saw yours, then you must have seen mine? I'm sorry, I was just being polite before, I know exactly who you are. Anyway, the point is I'm sure he kept my picture somewhere. And you saw him often enough, so...

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

Well, you were the other woman in his life. I heard he died recently, but maybe he's in the house. I expect you know what's going on because you were closer to him in the last few years than myself.

(Pause.)

CATHARSIS RAT

You have a lovely house, and that's the truth.

IDENT MATH

Anyway, sorry to show up like this, out of the blue. I don't know how this must look. I've got some stuff to say... and it's important...

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

The reason I'm here is I am leaving soon and I need to take care of a few things before I go. Cause by the *end of it*, we didn't belong to each other anymore, and he was shopping for you. Or someone like you. I don't know if you ended up what he wanted and I guess you're interchangeable in that respect.

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

Or, not. I don't really know you.

(IDENT MATH looks down to
CATHARSIS RAT, then behind her. She looks
back towards EXCLAMATION MARK.)

IDENT MATH

Um, when he gave me the house, maybe you don't know this, but it was kind of damning. What it meant to us, what it had done to us, it was like a curse.

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

I guess you would have to be there, really. Anyway, the point I'm getting at is that I figured out what he was thinking. I spent a lot of time thinking, and it started with me thinking about him thinking. I think he expected me to be the better person and weigh the burden of the tomb we shared together, and I see that and I agree, and I've done it. I've learned everything I can from this.

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

Take care of a few things...

(IDENT MATH tosses EXCLAMATION POINT the keys to the house.)

IDENT MATH

So it's yours now. The whole thing, for good. And I don't know why this is so hard for me, but I think it has to do with the fact that you're not what you used to be, and he might not be alive like he once was. I don't care what you look like and I don't care if he can hear this. Because...

(IDENT MATH looks down at her
own hands, shaking slightly.)

IDENT MATH

I guess the reason my hands are shaking is because you could never understand this and I feel weird trying to put into words you'll understand. And maybe I'm not doing a good job, because you're new, but I don't care anymore.

(IDENT MATH dusts her hands and
begins stepping backwards.)

IDENT MATH

Comma, period.

(IDENT MATH picks up CATHARSIS
RAT and exits.)

(End scene.)

ACT IV

Scene 7

(The truck what drove the house. IDENT MATH is holding the disconnected phone in her arms, standing with CATHARSIS RAT by the passenger side door.)

(PILOT enters.)

PILOT
(Pleasantly.)

Greetings from the future.

IDENT MATH

Hello.

PILOT

I have so many stories. You won't believe what the future has in store!

IDENT MATH

Is it a fog?

(Pause.)

PILOT

Have we met before?

IDENT MATH

No.

PILOT

Huh.

(Pause.)

PILOT

Did you sneak in?

IDENT MATH

Just leave the house here. Anywhere. I don't care.

PILOT

Right, okay. You sure we haven't met before?

IDENT MATH

No, we have. We talked. Quite a bit actually.

PILOT

Really?

IDENT MATH

Yes.

(Pause.)

What did we talk about?

PILOT

Probably the future.

IDENT MATH

You're not sure?

PILOT

I don't know, am I?

IDENT MATH

(Pause.)

I'll figure you out, lady. We're not through, you and me.

PILOT
(Suspicious.)

(PILOT walks away, and then turns around.)

I'll get to the bottom of this.

PILOT

(PILOT exits.)

He won't get to the bottom of it.

CATHARSIS RAT

He told me that part too.

IDENT MATH

It appears to be a day of new beginnings then! And that's the truth!

CATHARSIS RAT

We're not piles of life, Catharsis Rat.

IDENT MATH
(Distantly.)

Why you don't need a narrator at all, do you?

CATHARSIS RAT

IDENT MATH

Well I never said that.

(AMBASSADOR approaches on a horse drawn carriage.)

AMBASSADOR

Well what are the odds of this?

CATHARSIS RAT

Up there in the trillions, friend!

AMBASSADOR

Someone get this guy a suicide!

CATHARSIS RAT

It's not in the cards, friend!

IDENT MATH

Where did you get a horse drawn carriage?

AMBASSADOR

Care of Won Bicyclette! I was on my way back here but I got cornered by some of those tongues I was telling you about!

IDENT MATH

I remember those tongues!

AMBASSADOR

It turns out nothing worked out like it was supposed to. The rebellion of my former associates was an asylum.

CATHARSIS RAT

Whatever, friend!

IDENT MATH

Are you free, then?

AMBASSADOR

Yeah, everyone's dead or infirm. The veil's been pulled back and I'm laughing!

CATHARSIS RAT

Whatever, friend!

AMBASSADOR

I heard you the first time! That's why you yelled it! I was there!

CATHARSIS RAT

Too much fun.

AMBASSADOR

Miss, this may sound rude, but I don't think we covered this; what are you doing out here?

IDENT MATH

I'm on my way out. I'm going to keep going East.

AMBASSADOR

Well of course you are leaving with me. Won's on his way up and he's arranged for a place anywhere I can possibly think of.

(Pause.)

IDENT MATH

I don't think I've ever seen a horse and carriage in real life.

CATHARSIS RAT

She's right!

AMBASSADOR

Let's go then!

(IDENT MATH begins walking away.)

IDENT MATH

And what about you, Catharsis Rat?

CATHARSIS RAT

Hm?

(IDENT MATH stops.)

IDENT MATH

Where are you going?

CATHARSIS RAT

I think I might pursue the gentleman that wrote those fortunes in the backpack. I suspect we might collaborate on a brand new doctrine.

AMBASSADOR

The name's Vert Sluglips. He's at the castle breaking into the wine. If I know Vert Sluglips, and I don't that well, he will use all the washrooms. He'll be running the place.

CATHARSIS RAT

Is he your brother?

AMBASSADOR

No, and I don't know why you would ask that. That's sick.

CATHARSIS RAT

I was being nice!

(Pause.)

CATHARSIS RAT

Ut!

AMBASSADOR

I love this fucking rat!

(AMBASSADOR exits.)

AMBASSADOR

(Voice.)

Oh, and mind the civil strife!

(IDENT MATH continues walking.)

CATHARSIS RAT

I'll find you again sometime soon. I get bored easily.

IDENT MATH

I'm not worried.

(IDENT MATH begins walking away with the phone in her arms.)

IDENT MATH

Hey what about those monsters that prey on non visibles?

AMBASSADOR

Won made arrangements for some pretty special rifles and capes!

IDENT MATH

Oh, okay.

(The phone in her arms begins ringing. She looks down towards, presses the button, and holds it up to her ear as she exits.)

(Blackout.)