

***Bit Off More Than I Could Chew***

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*-I miss all of you, but I am so glad that we shared some time on this doomed spinning orb*

### **Prophecy 1:**

I saw there in my most terrible visions that came in my slumber, three separate meteors hitting the Earth like bullets, I saw the fear as the sky opened from lack of atmosphere, I saw waves larger than the highest conceived buildings coming for us all as we stared in terror unable to prepare for anything but doom. Surely our creators have finally come to unmake us for the evil of our decimation, and the attempts to spread it to other worlds. I saw great waves of madmen roaming with demons, preying on those that still pray, and I saw a world bathing in flames, as a prequel to the Hell that awaits all of mankind that refused redemption. A new heaven awaits those who's fertile minds and green thumbs are ready to stand weaponless and without vanity. I saw all of this in my dreams, awakening, drenched in feverish sweat. America has become the burnt out, drug whoring, discarded army veteran of the world, having produced so many, the country has now adopted this manner as it's world presence. The often laughed at, often appalling, stench of homelessness that comes from being forgotten by anyone that matters. The slowly rotting half alive vagrant who has no idea what medical insurance looks like. Especially after losing all worth, and all mortal possessions. What have we become, a country obsessed with porn and violence. Staring blindly into the plastic and minerals in the palm of our hands.

**Prologue: My Eyes Were Bigger Than My Stomach From The Start**

I, a random fellow you probably wouldn't bat an eye at on the street. Just another passenger on Earth from the sweet ass U.S of A, God bless all of us, the luckiest complacent people on THE FUCKING PLANET. Then there are people like me, hard working apathetic collectors of everything that is bullshit. I let out a long, dismal sigh from my tiny, musty cubicle, "never thought I would live this looong..." I said half to myself, and half to the others lurking in cubicles around me in that quiet, overpoweringly musty room around me that stunk of mildew from half assed carpet steamings. It literally smells like they boil old socks in this very room after we leave this banking center. From the neighboring cubicle a young woman's giggle then squeaky voice rings out over the din of the cafeteria sounds made by a large office/call center, the din made while everyone is speaking at once, trying to prove a point or vye for attention, "you know what?" she chimed over the chatter of the multitude, "I hear more and more guys saying that exact same thing, it's so weird, I guess most men really planned on not being here for very long or something." I take a slow deep breath before answering the familiar little voice, all while feeling my pulse nervously with my fingers, and simultaneously stretching my ankles beneath the desk before me. "You see, people are meant to run and chase dreams, but some of us sit on our ass for hours and days, sitting for eons while typing endlessly all day long really takes a toll on a normally healthy, active person who's used to being on their feet, as I am." I went on though, as I neurotically obsessed over my body functions "Well, I never planned on dying young, but I definitely

did not plan on getting old, when I had my whole life ahead of me it was definitely something that seemed like a possibility, you know, living in the fast lane with other young and beautiful people, that thrill of dying young in the flames of passion, evading the simplicity of normality, just calls out to you. When you live a simple life, death is often predictable, well it seems so anyway, so there is the dilemma, little hamster, you know one day you are gonna be gone, so do you get it over with fast and fun or cling to it with every bit of strength you got, til you got nothing, and are finally the old shit in the room.” a small giggle mixed with a “you’re crazy,” erupted from the cubicle's silence along with a puff of flavored vape mist. Thinking back over the span of what I’ve accomplished and am calling my life, it really does seem that I have gotten lucky for well over forty years. well over the amount of time many I have loved had been given anyway. I procrastinated more while laying my head on the piles of paper around the desk which framed it like a coffin's walls. With yet another loud obvious sigh I began sorting through the endless stacks “So much work to do today, I really should’ve died young.” The reality of it however, is that only a lucky few die young, instead of withered and ancient, soaked in urine, with a mind full of holes. The truth is, the farther back I venture into my mind, it is still just as bad as the thoughts I create anew. There was a time however, like in most lives, where there are only golden horizons with multiple possibilities. That is a place where I often get stuck, tricking my mind into believing that we are still there in those moments, in those possibilities. The reality though, is far from the truth, and I am really lost in a prison of what is and has been all in one delusion. I know I would do it all over again with the exact same mistakes and outcomes as long as it brought me to the exact moment where I met my true love again. Bloody teeth chattering in the bowels of the interstellar winds of purgatory, over and over and over, as long as each new rebirth brought me to within a shoulder swipe by my one true love once more. I live there in my mind still, long after it has been over. Still there in the Hollywood hills speeding in her mustang with vicodin and vodka in our bloodstreams keeping us numb

to the thrill of death lingering at our heels. I was a vampire for her touch, and have never been the same since. I like to drift on the river that is my past and stop at her port to stay awhile and peer into the mists of where she is now. I am glad to have made it this far, but disappointed at all of the people I have failed. I have had many great nights though, flying through the city's alleys and streets on a bicycle chasing my friends blinking tail lights like a wolf as we went from bar to bar, inhaling the night air as we smoked and laughed, and picking up women to the songs and rhythm of the Texas nights. You would smell wood laurel trees and mesquite flavored BBQ as the moon chased the stars above you. That kind of atmosphere makes it easy to fall in love. No amount of perfect mixes can bring back the love that got away though. Nothing can fill that void, so it is best to avoid it. Love is like huffing gas, not gasoline though, more like helium, then setting yourself on fire while your head is spinning. Just keeps spinning too, in the fire, then for all eternity. I wish someone would have told us that love was so explosive. Red rimmed eyes stare out the window as some twenty year old sending me pictures blows up my phone. I wonder where my kids are? I wonder how they are doing. There is a blue fire there, at the end of that tunnel. An empty stomach, and tired feet. Truth is though, that when I look back, all I see is her. Time travel is so problematic, even in just hypothetical terms, because all you end up doing is living in the past, instead of the present. Even if time travel were possible not many people would use it for going forward in time, too many of us long for what was, and all that could have been had those periods of time gone differently. Right now I would gladly leap forward in time to when I was finished with all of this work, and on my way home to this life that I have finally built into something liveable. Something made possible by killing all of the apparitions in my dusty attic of my mind, you see you don't get ahead of yourself when you're too busy yelling at ancient ghosts that you lead around like phantom appendages. Starving drooling wraths that are the conversations you were too shallow to have with the real person at the actual time. Even here and now as I write this, all of these what could have been

moments call to me, and want to be analyzed yet again, like a thousand great arms pulling me in different directions as I plummet into deep thoughts. The only thing to ever draw me out of these trances is the stab of the tattoo needle. Injecting that artificial confidence into my cold, cracked epidermis. The etchings of madmen and criminals mixing with my dripping blood. Now that is therapy. I cannot think of any drug better than the high that comes from the torturous trance that comes from needles glazing your body with art. I long for it, even now though my carcass of a canvas is fully covered from head to toe, leaving me no room for many doodles on this flesh. This is the new me, that carried me after the old me failed. will carry me into the afterlife, where my body will be made new, from different stars and galaxies colliding. Rather be back running my old tattoo studio, than stuck in this cubicle surrounded by people much younger than me. That's what you deal with though when your wandering days come to an end. When you have arrived where you wanted to go after all of the wandering, all that is left is cherishing that paradise by leaving, or becoming a slave to it and staying. Especially when you stop wandering out of your body, stop wandering into the abyss, a place where there are no valleys, only the dark descent into that which humans are capable of. Just keep in mind when dabbling in forces of nature, always give something away or discard something you love when you gain something you think you need. Or the universe will take something instead. Equivalent exchange is the only truth of the universe, above all else, always leave something when you take something. I'm just glad I'm not one of those poor bastards who have no idea a spider has been living in their ear, and you should too. My good friend Ashley had one in his ear, and it would drive him insane, but he had no idea what was going on. Ashley would suddenly twitch his head then slam it into a wall or slap it so hard you would feel it across the room. Then after a few hard shakes, he would go back to normal. This went on for nearly a month, keeping him up at night, or causing him to look like a fool in the middle of a sentence when he damn near put his head through a wall. Finally someone convinced him to go to the

hospital, cause he may have a brain tumor or something. Nope, it was a spider. In fact the doctor knew exactly what to do, apparently many people end up with a spider or roach in their ear at some point, and it's way more common in poverty. So that was that and he even got to name the damn thing. We are all a parasite just clinging on for life, somewhere on this dying planet. Billions of drunk or high gluttonous monsters leaking enzymes streaking sexual patterns into the cosmos that we envision are constellations of Gods that came before us. With something living in your ear that probably just got lost and wanted a nice warm hole to sink into. God knows we all want the same. “ I think I’m gonna call in on friday and give myself a three day weekend Trinity... What do you say? We grab a pizza and watch one of those wizard boy movies?” Another muffled giggle and monosyllabic noise escapes from the twenty year old. I may as well get a start on that and just check out early. Work is for suckers, suckers with time to spare when each day is actually a gift, time to spare is the greatest luxury apparently. Either way a stiff drink and a swimming pool was calling my name. That is the key to immortality. Simply live each day, and enjoy it, fill it with meaningful joyous things, and not just things you can hold. Why cage yourself like a songbird, when there is a lazy river waiting to dip your toes into as you lay back in a rubber innertube and simply float the day away while basking in the hot sun. Not too hot, not too cold, and not too sober. The very definition of the song row row row your boat, because indeed merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily...life is, but a dream. Not dreams of sherbert and kisses either, but dreams of spider legs protruding from dead blue mouths, and tight serpent coils in dry unexplored portals. Where are the unicorns? Often we wonder, well, they left this dark world, of hideous strengths and mindless savage death, to venture out into the light of a newly promised day. “ Each day’s a gift my ass,” I mumble, as I turn my laptop on to do some filing. I used to sell dildos and drugs, and now I’m filing, gone are the days of being a gangster and hitting licks to make a profit. That only lasts for so long, unless you hit it big, but most don’t. So naturally, you go where the money is. The city. I remember a time when I was a



somebody in my own mind, not just anybody, a somebody with a hidden purpose, a secret destiny to be revealed at the end of the world. I just knew one day I would catch a dream where an alien or angel would take me and lead me like Dante Alighieri into the lake of fires shores and tell me that the world will end on a certain date, but nope, not even a guy in a giant bunny suit has come for me. You can never be certain though, until the end, what your purpose is. Even if at the last moment, with your last breath, you reveal some secret known, then it will have been meaningful I suppose. Unless you die a nobody in a cubicle surrounded by paperwork, a house full of possessions left to no one. Sighs can never truly be long enough. I don't know how I spent so many years being a journalist to end up doing what I do to get by. I should be writing every hour of every day, but hey, sometimes it just works out that way. All I know is that I am aware of my position in the universe, and have gained all that I could ever need or want in this life without being rich or famous. So it is possible to come back after losing it all, it is possible to get a degree when you're older, and it is possible to make something out of a broken life. Don't ever stop grinding your meat into the machine, cherish the pain, as you are devoured, for it never ends. Until you watch your life fleeing before you, as everything that was once so perfect, goes wrong. All that you can do is hope that when that day comes, that you are capable of believing that you did well with what time you were given as you were forced to live a life in this hostile existence. I chose to overcome and organically grow with those who were sharing the world around me. Communal living and sharing food is the way life should be. We chose to pave roads and pay taxes, when it should have been far more simple to live and die. Anyway, let me set the record straight on a few things. Yes I am insufferable, moody, and often talk too much. I also care too much, and hurt deeply when someone decides to hurt me. I never had much guidance, so whatever maturing and growing I did, I did it on my own, and probably did it wrong, but how much can you accomplish when you're the sludge in the microorganism sphere that makes us what we are. Always broke, always late, and always the butt of a

joke. The real joke is that we are living through the apocalypse. We have killed every creature on this Earth that we do not eat, covered most of the land in concrete or asphalt, and have become the zombies we feared would eat our brains as we shuffle about staring at our phones. I can see it, but I wonder how many more realize this. There is always way too much time to overthink in the day, especially when you are at a job you hate because you thought you would be rich and famous by now. The thrill is gone for me though, now I am just pushing the envelope to feel. Last week I rode a bike through a lightning storm for ten city blocks in memory of my dead friend who had loved storm chasing. I stopped and looked into the moonlight as the water struck my face, taking me back to the first storm I hid from under my bed as a babe, clinging to my bear desperately until I fell into slumber, petrified by the wrath of the storm. Now I am at the center of the storm, and feeling the most alive, but I cannot help but wonder, would anyone do the same for me when I am gone? Probably not, and I am fairly certain the only people who will attend the funeral will be my mixed race children I created to combat racism. Probably not even them though, after they read this life story. Then again who even writes their own life story while they're still alive? I'll tell you who, someone who did not heed Lynyrd Skynyrd's advice to be a simple man. a person who in fact, is the very opposite of a simple man, and is in fact a complex organism. Someone who never knew who they were, so they wrote it all down to make sense of it, and possibly help their seed understand, why they were, the way they are. In case the heat gets too hot, and I fizzle out before the sun melts all of the ice left on the Earth. Anyway, here is some light reading for a rainy day. A little story to take your minds into this current trending fascination humans have with being lords of Hell, the urge many have to defy the light, to stare into the abyss and contemplate the mysteries of the darkness, this is a peek into those attempts a mildly pornographic excursion into a man's many addictions and the things that fuel them. That's what we have become in our attempt to kill our God's presence. Things collecting things until we die and truly face the void. Then why bother hoarding possessions for people

to quarrel over when all that can accompany me in the ground are these tattoos all across my acres of skin, my daughters portrait on my ribs, My son's name down my spine, the golden girls across my lower back, anime characters, the bride of Frankenstein's monster, a seahorse, countless others doodled on my already scarred body, physical graffiti etched over nerve synapsis. I suppose the only real dilemma in life is to die old and frail, or young and tragically. A serpent-like tail nearly a mile long sturs the dust long lost memories up. My mind often tries to not stray to a time when I met the lord of death and darkness on the surface of the moon. That the only thing that saved me was my human spirit of perseverance. I don't know how to tell people that I am a psychic that can astral project into the night. People no longer believe in that sort of thing, this is a new world of science and technology. Anywho, on to you my dear sap who bought this to read about my shit existence instead of going on their own adventures, you will learn that my mind wanders, so before I rant more and more about nothing at all and everything else, I may as well take you back to the beginning like any good spiel, take you back to the beginning when the lord of death first came for me. Take you back to before my life became a repeat offense of insanity and perseverance. Back to when the world was simple, when it was 1989 and there wasn't a goddamn cellphone in sight, as a slightly less ruined atmosphere kept us nice and Goldy locks like in our perfect porridge of suburban middle class hell. Like most addicts I started out as a regular person who wanted more than their position allowed for. Good old 1989.

## **Chapter 1. Before Smartphones And Extremely Crooked Spines**

I am only telling you about my life because I fear the end of the world is at hand, and so that you will never consider me to be a mystery. No matter how vulgar and savage it may seem, here is a summary of a single life lived by an unfortunate creation. A testament, that this truly was what I refer to as my life so that the same may be avoided by you, a little life, but oh, what a life. Like most middle classed children I was brought into this life to be damaged and left traumatized from the start it seems, from the get go just another abused kid in the American southwest. Born with a broken heart, literally. A kid destined to always be a daydreamer, a wanderer, always in the shadow of death, and far from the

joys of truly being a child of light. I know what you may be thinking, that we all live in the shadow of death, and that is correct, only it seems to me that death is infatuated with my life for some reason or another as death never ceases to leave my side or stray from my thoughts. Death made it a mission to take me off of the face of the Earth from the time I took my very first premature breaths out of the womb. My then malformed heart was beating hard, as my malformed ears popped deep inside from my own shrill screams, and from the decompression of leaving the womb. I made it through that though. I first truly saw the lord of death's mangled face with my own eyes as it came for a dying drunk driver that had rear ended my mother and I when I was about five years old, as we sat at a stop sign. Going sixty five through a quiet neighborhood the drunkard's car met the rear of our car and my life then became sheer physics. My twenty pound, five year old body swayed violently next to my mother as her face was crushed into the steering wheel, the hard seatbelt gave me whiplash as it burned and ripped into my baby soft my skin with the panicked grip of a frenzied Gorilla. The dust settled, and death smiled at me as it lifted the pale green soul from the destroyed flesh of the man who had careened into us. All I could think was, "I hope he doesn't see my momma's face, I wish this car was invisible." Lucky for my mother and I, death had not noticed her that day. Death had come for the crushed, and deceased old drunken man, not the near dead woman and child. One thing I did learn that day is that death is a sneering, often physical joke, and if you are wise, you will never fear the dark, you'll just laugh at the joke, we are decaying as soon as we have life, that is the truth of your own fears. From this you are reborn into a beam of light, from this maggot riddled meat, a spirit will sail far away into the universe.

I realized I had a purpose when I was Seven years old. I would walk every day to the bus stop down the street to catch the early bus at around six in the morning. I would do this every day as a child often

before the sun was even up, and even more often, on cold dreary winter mornings just to get to school. Well an older woman that lived at the end of the street began to notice when I would be waiting and began to offer me the shelter of her home to wait for the bus and to feed me and warm me up each morning to avoid exposure as I waited on the corner of her house for the elementary school bus to pick me up and whisk me away to school where older more crafty children could corrupt me and obscure my view of the world as they bullied me and taught me bad habits, with their curses and terrible manners. A memory that sticks out the most from then was being molested by a teenage girl the week before I started kindergarten, which in my opinion was the birth of my O.C.D. This particular incident has always been one of those moments that has made a lasting impression in my life, especially since so much occurred at once in that short span of time that was memorable, beginning with that molestation, all of that trauma happening so near each other really shaped my childhood. It all really started with the witch though, and one cold day as I was waiting for the bus, I noticed that the old woman's house was suddenly very old looking, and nothing smelled good about it any longer. It now smelled like old human waste and mildew, instead of waffles and sausages, and there was a darkness in the window that was thicker than normal with a sort of fog inside. I heard a voice inside my mind say in a matter of fact voice that the witch that dwelt here that had been fattening me up to eat me, and that she would no longer be there waiting for me, no longer lurking and preying on kids, it said this in such a voice I had never heard before. A voice unlike my inner monologue, and I knew that the voice belonged to the mother of death. Death itself was devouring the witch like a spider, liquifying her insides while staring into my eyes from the fog as I peered into the depths of the dark shadows in that window. The darkness within seemed as deep and dismal as the ship Titanic's ruin, and it beckoned to me. I did not know it then like I know it now, but I was nearly kidnapped and eaten, and I never told anyone. I wondered why the witch had not been allowed to eat me though now that I knew she had been a witch, but just then the bus arrived to

take me to my first day of school, so I shrugged it off quickly. I mostly recall these things late at night, when I cannot sleep, for that is when the plague of dreams finds me and reminds me of all I have borne witness to. The reason as to why I was raped one fall night, was simply because my parents both had over night jobs at the time, so my brother and sister and I were forced to sleep at babysitters that allowed overnight stays. Well one particular evening after watching a fairly sexy movie with their family that I am absolutely sure was "Blue Velvet" something my sister and I would never had been allowed to watch at our young age, we went to bed in the room with their children, my sister and I with several of their children and a few other kids being babysit at night that were staying as well, all in one room sleeping on floors and beds. Well my babysitter had a daughter, a teenage girl, and she had me sleep beside her on the bed as she had taken a liking to me. Well around midnight when she was certain all were asleep she performed oral sex on me before making me penetrate her, I then had sex with her all I could that night, watching the kid on the floor as my sibling slept beside us on blanket beds, watching them sleep as I was losing my innocence, I was hoping no one woke up and saw what was going on it would have been so embarrassing. Just then my mind strayed to the witch eating my body somehow. So that was my introduction to being an adult. That and the school shooting incident two weeks later. I was nearly a victim in one of the first school shootings in Texas in 1990. Luckily my horrendous ear aches from being premature and malformed had left me incapacitated in the nurse's office that morning with debilitating ear pains. As the young boy was shot down by the police trying to kill his bullying oppressors, the rest of us were ushered into the gym to hide. I had a great deal of stress from that incident and then began listening to a lot of music. I withdrew into so many types of music from Michael Jackson to Garth Brooks to Iron Maiden and Nirvana. Music is the only true form of time travel we possess in this life, I believe, it binds with our neurons so without any concept of that notion, I bound many early memories to music, not knowing that someday far into the future that it would help as I would recall it all, and make

more sense of a life lived later in angry silence, screaming inside, while slowly dying inside of old age. Unknown to everyone in my life my heart slowly began killing me from the time that I came into this world, death saw me come in the door and began watching me slowly decay like a flower sprung from a rotting deer carcass in winter. Death had me as a slave from the start, where most come into the fold and start to learn as they blossom. From the very start I was touched by death. I became a boomerang, always coming back to the thrill of sex and death, and this was as a young boy! The witch would never be able to devour me, death was enjoying the slow emaciation of my soul much more. My family and I began to move quite often, as my father progressed further up in the ranks of his state official job, so nearly once a year I found myself in a new school, three elementary schools, two junior high schools, and five high schools to be precise, I often felt like I was alone, despite knowing many people my age far and wide in Texas, and several other states as well, including New Mexico and California. I was now considered native to many places, and had many childhood homes, many childhood pals, I often felt isolated and was deep in my thoughts or a book. I would reflect often on all of my youth lost to moving and the many friends I would lose contact with who would grow up without me and was often seen as a brooding kid who would read in the corner. I had a college reading level by the eighth grade as a result however, so I would often read several books at once, Dante's "The Divine Comedy," and Steven King's "Pet Semetary" being my absolute favorites at the time, as well as "Interview With The Vampire" and Grimms fairy tales. I was known to be the kid that would walk into things while reading a book, the way people are now with cell phones. I was also known as the saxophone kid, cause I was forced to learn to play saxophone much to my chagrin around the time I was in the eighth grade, I studied music and martial arts, played a few sports after school as well. All for discipline, the saxophone though, that was my main thing for a while as it took a lot of self discipline, and actually became fun to me, playing in sync with hundreds of other people. It was a thrill. I played that damn thing from junior high, well into



high school. So that meant I was a reclusive band kid, but that was ok because I wet the bed as a kid into my teenage years so feared sleep overs and normal kid routines, as I was so utterly ashamed of it, so I would isolate most of the time for this as well, and as a result my little brother Caleb, became my best friend and constant adventure companion. We would wander in the woods for hours with fake swords and armor building campsites and eating canned fruit we had brought or raviolis, we did this as kids and even as young adults instead of trying to drink and experiment with other kids we would use our imagination. I loved trotting in the creeks looking for mudbugs while we unknowingly got lost on multiple occasions. If I could, honestly I would die alone in the woods whenever it is finally my time to go, just me and the scents and sounds in the woods. It is the most serene place I have ever known. On my twelfth birthday, quite by accident I learned that in my sleep I leave my body and travel into the universe, I learned this when I was accidentally knocked unconscious. I also communicate with other people that can astral project, as I am traversing in this plane. It seems like many people do this unknowingly, perhaps even whomever is reading this. You will know it only when you have felt the powdery dust from the moon in your hands, or watched the rings of Saturn ebb and flow. For that is as far as I wished to sail into the darkness even in my youth, when I was more carefree and daring, in old age I have become more cautious and pragmatic. Astral projecting is addictive, it is like feeling the pulse of the universe. This is not the domain of men, but some of us are far more spiritual than others and more in tune with psychic empathy and the electricity that is the universe. It is not mathematical like the foundation of the cosmos, it is spirituality and mysticism and pure magic, so therefore will eventually be lost to science. This ability has helped me many times throughout life with regenerating my body and edifying my spirit. Especially since death can only go as far as the moon, as the lord of death is confined to this Earth and its satellites. So the moon is often safe for spirits to dwell, even if death is there. The ancient one only goes there to recall a time when it too could sail farther than man's reach, out to where

the universe becomes pure geometry and rhythm, the deep mysterious portions of heaven where amazing things are being concocted. I know this because I saw this and perhaps one day you will understand, if science and technology does not destroy everything first. It was because of my father, my children's forefather, and the profession he followed in law enforcement. That made me resent the police and that is why I was often on the road with my family, and thus, on the run from my darkest thoughts on the path which constantly led us into the winds of change. Until the winds of change engulfed us. I should say, I was a cosmic sailor, lost in black skies. As in my depression I would escape to slumber, where I could be master of something. Something you should know, my children, when you constantly run from problems and live in the past. Know this, that there is a time traveler that lives in all of us. A person who would love desperately more than anything to go back in time and warn yourself, about the many trials and tribulations ahead. About all of the heartache, regrets and possibilities... but most importantly of all. That time traveler dearly wants to let that younger version of you know how it all ends. These two people will never meet, however, they dream of one another constantly. I wander to avoid this encounter just in case, they somehow meet in the middle. Wandering has never really bothered me. I have been a wanderer my entire life. From the earliest days of wandering from the family yard into other neighbors' open yards, sending my furious young parents into a panic as they seek their lost child and would find me eating food at nearby houses. Wandering did not bother me as a directionless youth either, nor as a regretful older man. Wandering is the way of the tiger, it is also the way of the worthless, homeless dogs of the Earth. Some of us are just born to wander. By foot, or pedal, wheel, or boat. There is a wanderlust that exists in the people who had something taken from them early on in life, something precious that can never be returned. Not by a single living human being. So we, the scarred, shall wander.

## **Chapter 2. Mini Van Highways For Modern Nomads**

Most of my adolescent life was watching people that I admired and love die, as my family and I moved ever onward, as I grew more distant, dissociative like a sociopath, for harboring strange desires and lusts in my heart, for being scarred as a young boy, for being a daydreamer. I was also developing a knack for lying and stealing, I was hurt in so many ways that I was often mentally projecting myself into

the books that I loved, wandering with Dante in hell, battling rat hordes in Redwall, leading adventures with muscled soldiers or killing werewolves and vampires. I was in tune with myself for a young adult, but stayed battling internal demons that were enormous. No one even noticed. Not even when I went from an all A student to a B student to a D student in a short amount of time. once I began to lose touch with my attention span. It was all over for me academically, and that was far before the internet, although I do recall in my Sophomore year of high school when the internet was invented and we began taking classes that solely introduced this new wonder to us, and how to navigate it. That made my mind go even farther out into the abyss. That abyssal wasteland that is the cyber world, where many minds go to mush in the midst of endless amounts of distractions and pornography. Little did I know that many of those elements would envelope my life. I knew that one day I would have my own Goliath to face, my own monstrous dragon to slay, but I was not aware that they would be of my own creation. Every person on this planet has a passive mask they show off, and a creature they hide. I wanted to be rid of my creatures by the time I was in middle school. There will be many times in your life where you will shed your skin and become someone new, always make sure the new you is full of love, and not another version of the bitter old you, instilled with the knowledge of the old you, but with new faces. Make sure you aren't dragged into the hate that is overtaking the world, don't let it bring you down. There is another better you waiting around for the birth of a new day. Which is something that I did not come to understand until far later in my life, For when you are young there is a grand idea that there will be an unlimited number of days ahead. This is a grand delusion, for we can become dust and crumble at a moment's notice any day. Years stretched out with these routines, and before I knew it, my adolescence was behind me. I was now a teen boy, who was a full blown sex addict, brought on by playboys and the constant urge to fuck or masturbate, my hunger was unlimited since I had already been dwelling on sex for many years. Which is somewhat normal, or so we have been taught, but to me it was a constant

shame, because religion says it is wrong, but society says it is normal. Socially acceptable to get raped and crave sex all the time afterwards. This is a clash that will always exist, the socially acceptable norms that come and go. Do not be a weak tree blowing to and fro in the wind, be a mighty redwood that never moves, then you will be sure of yourself, not what others are sure of. It was during my high school years that I began to astral project more and more but without trying at all. Then with my first tastes of alcohol it ceased, as though my body never entered true sleep again. I would encounter deep lucid dreamscapes, and realize that I was somewhere else entirely than in my own mind. My fingers could actually feel the sand of shorelines on distant worlds, for in that pure electrical state, you are light, traversing the realms of consciousness and reality like lightning. I knew it was better than reality wherever I was, because everytime we moved I had to re-discover who I was or conform into an idealized version of myself to fit in with new people. My freshman year of high school was pretty normal, lots of marching band practices and secret crushes on cheerleaders that I would never talk to. I had some very good friends during these years, I finally stopped wetting the bed so we would have sleepovers and eat little Caesar's pizza when it still came in a bagged box, play dungeons and dragons or magic the gathering and see who could generally stay awake the longest. pretty much every weekend, and then go back to school and basically do the same thing only at school in the band hall. My friend Chris's mother was a sincerely sweet woman who would always make sure we were comfortable in their little guest house when our group was frequenting their house. Which we were. To five teenage boys it was paradise. So we would throw our adventures at his house and sometimes at my house but at my house it would be cramped and we didn't have a way to be isolated and make crank calls from the bar phone, cause we didn't even have a bar or small guest house to put a bar in. so usually at Chris's house but definitely never at Will's house because he had a massive retarded brother who would throw things at you or run and yell at the top of his lungs while peeing his tighty whities. Then one October weekend we were preparing for our usual

weekend routine when Chris informed us that we couldn't sleepover anymore and that they were moving, because his mother had committed suicide apparently and they did not wish to be there anymore. That was hard for me to swallow, she always seemed so happy, and also because until that moment I had no idea you could take your own life. I was left with so many questions, and since none of the rest of us had spacious homes with relaxed parents we quit having our sleepovers altogether. I was often thinking about suicide after that, like what would it be like to stop living and step over, would it be like the space realm from sleep, or hell? it became a dark secret of mine that I was always thinking about. I even tried to cut myself a few times to see how it felt, cut my arms up with a medical lance, you see death and sex have a strong pull on curiosity so it is best to never dwell on them so that they never have the chance to take over your mind. Life has many more facets than that. After that we moved as well, and then my life at A.C. Jones high school in Beeville Texas was pretty normal, I was well liked all around and never bullied really, never got into any trouble or fights, and was making pretty decent grades. Then because of some black smudge on our family, we moved to Pettus Texas, a tiny farming town straight out of the frontier days, about twenty miles down the road but still close enough for my dad to work. I began going to school in a town that did not even look large enough for a school, let alone three of them. There we were though nonetheless and all of my friends were now twenty miles away, playing magic: the gathering with some other saxophone player. May as well have been on the moon out here in the sticks, when you are a teenager with no car. Luckily I have always had a knack for making friends, even on days when I am being introverted. Even if there aren't many friends around. So before long I had a few pals, which was fortunate for me because in a town that small, there is nothing to do at all, not one thing, so you need some pals just to kill time with. My three best friends in Pettus were Micah, Michael, and Lee, we were like a typical young high school comedy troupe that always left everyone in our classes in stitches, and were synonymous as we always were a group. During this time I

learned so much about many different elements of life that few people at the time really had to experience. I was coming of age and always chasing girls, even though I had no idea what I would even do with a girl. I was still more into reading comic books and watching the x-men cartoon in the afternoons, although I was still in band, and also played a few sports that year. I was still trying to get my rush from sex and death. I mostly played sports because it was a small Texas town and they pretty much made us play sports. I preferred making music with all of my friends though, and remained mostly in the band at all levels of competition. I was quite comfortable as the class clown, laughter has always been my main method for diffusing situations or amusing myself. I love to make voices for animals, and narrate movies I have already seen, this pastime or making up dumb lyrics for songs on the radio. My sophomore year I also started my first real vice, smoking cigarettes with Michael, the typical renegade teenage thing to do. We would sneak up on rooftops after a game and smoke, or walk off behind the school to smoke. Scrounging up money to have one of Michael's ten older uncles get us a pack to share. Despite my congenital heart disease I picked up the habit and I smoked away, somehow I believed that cross country running in school would balance it out. I also began to attend youth church with my siblings and was becoming a devout Christian, when I had the time for it, despite my sexual deviance that I managed to hide, I felt a lot of shame for lust in my private hours. Church was probably the best bonding experience I ever had as youth though and it set me straight with other teens. We had gone for some time to an assembly of God church in Beeville, where we had made lasting friendships that could spring into future paths of delight, however we moved so much. So not only did it become new schools, with new friends, new homes to get used to but new churches also. I finally had my very first girlfriend towards the end of the Sophomore year, her name was Jessica, and she was so vibrant and lively. Before the summer began though, things began to change, our house dynamics shifted, and for some reason my father began staying away for weeks at a time, while my mother would hardly come home either. My

mother started smoking again, and drinking, and she would stay out and never come home, my brother and sister had been sent to stay with my grandparents, and I, a teenage boy at the age of fifteen, was always at home alone. I began to cook for myself, taking care of the house, all while maintaining my friendships, playing baseball at school, and practicing my Saxophone. I was all over the place, mentally but managed quite well to remain confident, though I had no idea what was going on in the universe or our house. My dear friend Michael, whose Mexican family was very dear to me, would often bring homemade meals to me, or just have me stay the night. I began to practically live there within a few weeks. Had my first taste of Liquor there, had my first phone call to a girl there, had my first fist fight there with Michael, and smoked lots of cigarettes on the roof while we contemplated what teenage boys dwell on. I loved Michaels hidden farm house in Tuleta Texas. It was where I even learned to drive, on an old farm road, while being taught by Michael. They were great support, when I was needing it and could not find it anywhere else. Then right as summer set in, my parents re materialized and informed me that when my siblings returned we would be moving out of state for the first time, to Hobbs New Mexico. Our parents had chosen reconciliation, and though I was the only child who found out the secret reason why they were apart for so long, no one else was privy to the heavy burden I carried, as well as my own demons that I fought. Death had tried to end my family structure, but had not succeeded. I made my rounds through my circles of friends and confidants, to my young girlfriend, relaying the news that we would be New Mexican soon enough, gave away some of my mementos, and then after helping my parents pack up the entire homestead, set off to a whole new state. My only friends now were my tarantula I had found a few months before, and my lifelong pet turtle Sparky. Sparky was nearly 20 years old now, a dingy colored box turtle about the size of a human heart. He was my stinky friend, who had been with me since the beginning, when I had accidentally run him over on my big



wheel while pretending to be Chuck Norris. I knew I loved turtles immediately, it was like my own dinosaur.

### **Chapter 3. Mother's Lemon Zest French Toast With Truffles**

Our family had set out across the eternal wasteland that is Texas, it takes days to drive across the state, even longer when you are dragging a house load of stuff with you, as well as animals, and angry children. That was the first time I saw snow, as we crossed over into the mountains, leaving Texas behind. I never thought I would live in another state, and here we were, about four hours from our destination in Santa Fe, then on to Roswell where we stopped and saw the alien museums and roadside attractions, then at last we made it to Hobbs. A big empty bowl of soup town, with actual tumbleweeds and twenty mph wind every single day. I kept telling my parents we should have stayed in Roswell. Mostly because our home was still being put together, on the land my father had bought outside of town, so we had to stay at a Holiday Inn express for the first week. Meaning all of our stuff sat in a big U-haul in the hot parking lot, while we sat in a room watching tv eating fast food each day. Three days into this jail sentence I realized I had made a grave, grave mistake. My turtle and spider were inside of the truck. Inside of the truck for days without food and water. It was a miserable death I bet. Which haunts me to this day, haunts me worse than anything in my life. Death managed to hit me where it hurt, and I never had another pet as long as I lived. Not even a fish. Death is always waiting to get the last laugh in this life of ours, so make sure you fill your life with laughter so you will live long. Live brightly, and die with joy in your heart instead of living in darkness and dying in fear. Summer was about a third of the way through, and I was very much bored living on the edge of town, not knowing a single soul, so I decided to try something new. Something I had attempted right before we had left Texas. A new way to express myself, and all that I had been internalizing. I decided to become a poet. I always loved rock and roll, I loved the way metaphors could be used to change the way you were thinking into a riddle, I decided to attempt romantic poetry, while divulging my abstract thoughts onto paper as manic dr. seuss like poems as well. I started with simple little rhymes I had created, then started to pour my heart out into page long poems. By the start of school I had even begun carrying a small notebook around with me, to jot down the little thoughts that seemed brilliant during the day. I would write in that notebook all

throughout the day and into the night, it became my escape as reading and video games had before that.

Writing in my little notebook, poems beside little poems and above other ones, sometimes as many as five different small poems all scattered over a single small page. adding parts to old ones that I would re-find, constantly expelling thoughts from my mind, in poetic fashion. I truly believe that this new found love of writing really saved my life a few times. Instead of becoming a psychopath, I was able to channel my good and bad thoughts into words, my vile thoughts, even my perverse thoughts, into glorious words. The best therapy any person can ever find is releasing their thoughts into the void without being judged. I was hooked, and even began reading different poets throwing Shelly, Jim Morrison, and Wilde into my reading sessions while reading Cujo and the bible as well. I wanted to be well versed to make my writing well rounded, so I would even read the dictionary. Eventually I discovered Palahniuk and his thoughts became my mantra . I was about a month into the school year there in Hobbs, not really doing much and mostly sticking to myself, eating lunch at a corner table, just kind of going through the motions. I had a ritual that involved cigarettes and walking, walking with my head down especially in the winter there, don't ever try to do your hair because it is too windy, just keep your head down and smoke a cigarette while waiting for the bus, sit at the corner table to not attract attention, eat two bags of Dorritos with a large Dr. Pepper at lunch, then coast on auto pilot and read the rest of the day. The perfect student, in advanced placement classes like anatomy and physiology, a blossoming young journalist for the school newspaper, and a closet sex fiend. I thought I was maintaining fairly well though. I dipped my Dorrito into some guacamole I had brought, and was turning the page on my poetry book to write a new entry, when I noticed the edge of a tray beside me. I looked over to see a long haired hippy guy looking back at me through thick square glasses. That was how I met my best friend who would change my life and the way I thought. That was the day I met Tomathy. One of the few very true lifelong best friends I would ever know. I knew this almost instantly, because as I was examining my little notebook of thoughts, Tomathy produced one as well and presented it to me by laying it

on the table. I was a little shy, meeting guys or girls for the first time makes me shy, but I usually get over it pretty quickly and become intuitive, so I asked “You’re a writer as well?” to which Tomathy replied with “Everyday.”

From then on we sort of became synonymous as pals like I had been years earlier with my sleepover pals, only now it was two morose teenage writers, getting into wild scenarios with each other like characters in a coming of age movie. We would share notes from classes we had together, and plan out of school excursions, which was usually just the two of us cruising around listening to Korn, smoking weed and drinking liquor. Skipping school is so easy when your new friend has a little old car that he was given by a sweet old lady who thought of him as a son, even though she had a big fat dumbass son she didn't like. We had a shit load of fun in that car, taking acid and shrooms, meeting girls our age and skipping with them at the cemetery. I knew we would probably move soon anyway, so it would not matter what my grades were, and since I had bailed on the school band this year for the first time since grade school, I didn’t care at all what happened, as long as I had my new pals and some sense of freedom. Freedom from my lucid dreamscapes that would not allow me to fly free any longer, freedom from my oppressive parents and religion, freedom from the burden of leaving it all behind eventually.

I had a lot of time to mess up my life, while also gaining life experiences. So I didn’t dwell on the possible future. I only knew I wanted more, to push the envelope and taste life. One day we skipped school and Tomathy introduced me to the wonders of Cocaine mixed with marijuana and smoked. It was like an eye opening experience for me which became problematic after I got a ravenous hunger for the white powder. Tomathy and I got high many times like that and lay on his roof talking on the phone to girls whom we liked but didn’t like us back. I began attending more and more school parties with our small group of misfits, Tomathy, Bill, Juan and myself. Which also happened to be our lunch arrangement each day at school at a small round table by the plants in the corner. One weekend the gang and I even dropped acid in

the middle of the desert deep in the night with a huge fire made from dead cactus and tumbleweeds roaring, We sat as a shirtless tribe drunk and on acid cutting ourselves on the legs and arms while we attempted to summon a demon from an old ratty copy of the Necronomicon Tomathy had come by. Anything to try to push the envelope, as we all stared into the flames I swear I was the only one who really saw the beast walk from the fire and say with a hurricane voice, "Each of you belongs to me now, and will die young." I felt serpents writhing in knots around my brain, I felt spider legs trying to escape my mouth, I felt like I felt as a boy seeing the giant wolf spider covered in her babies that crawled into my shoe escape up my leg, I felt the fiery warmth of fear and excitement in my crotch like finding an x rated magazine for the first time. I was blinking like I was blind, it seemed like we each blacked out, because when I came to I was running from the fire, in fact it seemed we had each ran from the fire in a completely different direction than each other. That was a bit much for me and I stopped trying so hard to be rebellious at home afterwards, but took my feelings out on the school. I had come to detest that beige colored brick building called Hobbs high school, mostly because my family had missed the year mark and stayed longer for my dad's job, so I was at a bit of a loss not knowing how to live in a place longer than a year, and how to come back from total apathy. So instead of trying to do better I began to act out more and would get detention for getting caught smoking marijuana between the hallways or cigarettes, or being headstrong with the faculty. It kept me from having anxiety, my drugs and escapisms. I loved it, having my own life, my own freedom, and even started skateboarding here and there, since the skaters were seen as the punks of school, the rebellious. Of course, ever writing about my experiences through poetry, and sharing them with Tomathy. I even began writing poems for the jocks around valentines day or for birthdays and got many teenage boys on the football and baseball teams a date AND more with my made up to suit their needs, poetry. I was also quite good at my journalism class, and was excelling as a reporter and writer there. When I wasn't high and on time, but my other classes were taking a hit, I was just squeaking by. Life

has a way of slowing down or speeding up when you are not really paying attention to it. Being the only creatures in the universe that try to enslave time, I found things going at a good pace, for a teenager anyway. I was doing more acid, weed, cocaine, and especially primos with Tomathy and my new pals, all on different occasions, different parties, different vibes. I was having a blast not caring about anything else, but was still being good at home or just staying away from home. For this reason my parents eventually decided that at the end of the school year I would be visiting my aunt in Ohio to work, and get away from my bad influences. It was with a heavy heart that I took a plane at the beginning of Summer, with only my bags and a bunch of carefree lost boy memories. I flew for hours and hours then arrived at my ex-biker aunt and uncle's farm in Ohio fully expecting to do nothing all summer, and instead was greeted with the prospect of working at burger king all summer. I was not looking forward to running around making burgers at all, so the first night there I was sleepless as I was deep in thought about how my life was going. I went for a walk on the road beside their farm and found a half a pack of cigarettes on the ground. I lit up and snuck through the soy field to the back porch where I lay under one of the clearest skies free from city distractions and smog. It was very nice in Ohio, despite the isolation, and since before long I would be working hard making burgers, I decided to write a book, something edgy and gory, I was really into the movie "Se7en" so I figured a serial killer story would be a good way to fill in my spare notebook. I wanted to write an insanely gory book about a man who thinks he is a wolf, saw himself as a wolf, but was obviously not one. A man who was a killer, who ran the night streets like an animal naked and savage. I really went all out with it also, it almost read like a sick journal, but it was really the skeleton of a serial killer story. Well, one boring day still in the beginning of Summer while I was out sneaking around in the soy fields smoking and hating Ohio, still waiting for my summer job to begin, my aunt and uncle decided to raid my stuff like wardens in a prison and found antiques I had boosted from a burnt down school nearby, some cigarette butts, and of

course my serial killer story. Wouldn't you know they took one look and believed instantly that these were my personal thoughts and that I was a child of Satan, sent to destroy their way of simple living. They honestly thought it was my own journal and that I was planning a killing spree and wanted to eat babies and have sex with the dead, so they boosted it from my room and brought it to their pastor. Now most of the residents of Plain City, which is by Columbus Ohio, are Amish. True blue horse carriage riding, clothes making beard growing hard working Amish with no sense of humor at all, much less an understanding of sexual depravity and murder. The first thing they did was forbid me to be in town any longer. Literally kicked out of town. Luckily my other uncle lived right down the street about a mile away, on a different farm in its own little town, all he had to say was they told me he has to stay with you the rest of the summer and earn his own money to pay for a bus ticket home because they were keeping my plane ticket home. Now I had to work all summer doing manual labor with my uncle who owned his own tile laying company. He did elaborate mansions a favor by making them look even more amazing with tile designs all over their kitchens, bathrooms, hallways and entrance ways. So from then on, I was what is known as a go for. Go for this and go for that, all while doing kung fu bullshit like Carrying huge buckets of water all over, carrying boxes of tiles, and sneaking off a lot to masturbate in rich peoples unfinished basements because it was so, very, boring when not being a go for.

My uncle was pretty cool though and gave me lots of cigarettes and beer for helping, he also happened to smoke a lot of weed with me while watching cult classic horror movies in the evening. He, after many private discussions, understood my serial killer book idea and was ok with it and with me being normal, just a little thrown off, but first made sure it was just a story and not my strange dark fantasy. We ended up becoming quite close friends while working hard together from sun up till sunset. I learned a great deal about my family from him as well, shadowy things no one talked about, as well as hilarious things that I would have never known about my dating parents. A real eye opening experience all while

making some money for school clothes and a bus trip back to New Mexico, from Ohio. That's like a four day bus trip. I was not looking forward to four days on a greyhound with strangers. The anxiety is the pits. I wrapped up the summer in Ohio, a social misfit and sexual deviant still, and was still seen as Satan by the local Amish community, only I now had a backpack full of clothes I picked out (for the first time in my young life, I was able to pick my entire wardrobe and pay for it,) it was mostly t-shirts of my favorite bands, and levis, a new pair of Air walks, as well as a buttload of c.d. 's from Nirvana to Pantera. I had a brand new walkman, and a pocket full of cash. I was ready to get this bus trip over with. My uncle and I smoked a joint, then I was off on my misadventure. Summer was ending, so it was a cool, rainy Ohio midday when the bus departed, embarking on all those miles before me. I could not help but wonder, what lay in store for me down the road, mile by mile, going across nearly the expanse of the East coast of America. The trip started off well enough, as we meandered from town to town, stopping every hour or so to pick up and drop off passengers. I was completely submerged in Pink Floyd's wall the majority of the way, especially disc two. I kept repeating it over and over again, smoking out of a small dugout pipe whenever we had a break to stretch our legs. I had some good conversations with people I was afraid of at first. We ended up having a long layover in St. Louis, during which I was actually robbed by an old African American man. He stole my bag and ran off with a few hundred dollars, leaving me with around sixty bucks to eat off of for the next few days. I learned then you cannot trust anyone, or their sob stories. He was telling me about how he was destitute and stranded there at the bus stop, and as soon as my back was turned he grabbed my bag and took off, I didn't even know what hit me, and he was gone like greased lightning, guess he was pretty spry for an old black guy. We kept the bus rolling though, and mile after mile I was closer to home and all my friends who never had written to me once the whole summer, even though I wrote to them when I could before I had moved in with my uncle I mean and started working every day from six in the freakin



morning until eight at night. Somewhere around Oklahoma during a layover I lost my small carry-on bag when I left it on the bus during their “routine” cleaning, so now I was left with only my walkman, one pink floyd disc, and about thirty dollars. I was still optimistic however, and tried to remain in my element, writing poems and sleeping a lot with my head on the window. The whole summer was shot to hell, just a waste of time and energy, lost the serial killer novel I had written to boot, lost damn near everything else on the way home save for my new clothes in the undercarriage in my large bag. At least I was nearly home though to my pals and a new school year. I arrived in Hobbs, once again on soil I knew well but would have to abandon eventually, once the winds of change picked up again. Another group of friends I was certain would pass into the recesses of childhood memory. First day back at Hobbs high school, I took a bunch of acid I had saved hidden in the back of the freezer in the garage, and pretty much tripped all day. I didn't even eat breakfast or lunch, I just wandered all day in and out of classrooms. some which I belonged in, and others where they had no idea who I was and had no idea why I was there. I didn't care about much anymore at this point, not about my friends who had never written to me, or about my family which I had learned so many new things about, not about my future, college, the military, not about one damn thing on this Earth. I only cared about drugs, and poetry. I decided I must leave my mark on this planet with writing. I was found in a trance after having stowed away in an empty room and wrote a bunch of poetry in my own blood, as well as a poem in blood on my white t-shirt. I then wore that stinky bloody poem for a shirt for two days. When I finally came down though, I felt exhausted, like I had been walking a hundred miles while staring directly into the sun. I also felt somehow truly enlightened and in tune with the cosmos, I felt as though I understood life and its deepest mysteries. Like a laser disrupting dust in total darkness. When I finally sat down for a one on one with my friend Tomathy as well as my other random groups of friends, I then found out they had never received a letter at all from me, and had actually written to me after obtaining my summer

address in Ohio from my sister. I was taken aback, I realized my other aunt had been intercepting my letters and throwing them away, as well as the letters that I had been writing. I was furious, but the acid really curbed my anger, made me more docile and placid, even though it was practically entirely out of my system, I felt no anger or depression, just understanding, like watching my life as if it were a lucid dream I was hovering outside of. I have always been quick to forgive and forget, especially when it comes to people that I cherish. I knew how to let love lead, and never let the sun set on me before I apologized to whomever I had been having issues with. Tomathy took me to a wild Chi Delta Chi party my first night back, a huge party where nearly our entire class was drinking, hundreds of students drinking trash can punch which is beer vodka ice and pink lemonade all dumped into one massive barrel. There was Cocaine and weed everywhere, as well as people hooking up in bedrooms at the trailer on the property nearby, people putting pills in girls drinks without them knowing, and people fighting over petty disputes made enormous by alcohol.. I went to the fenceline to piss, and saw people throwing up into the night as far as I could see, all clinging to the fence and violently dispelling all the trash can punch, it was such a sickly sweet smell in the clear night. I smiled and howled like a wolf. I was the wolf. A werewolf running mad into the woods, stopping now and then to belt out a hymnal on the alto saxophone I was carrying. A werewolf on ecstasy playing the saxophone. It all seemed so great being young and having good friends, but then sure enough, a few months into the fledgling school year, my dad got word that he would be returning to Texas for a new position. I knew that the only way I would grow old with any of my friends would be if I visited them in dreams, while astral projecting into the void. I didn't even try to pass my classes the weeks leading up to our departure. I would skateboard mostly, and smoke a whole whole lot, I would go to class and walk out, or just sit there and disrupt until I had all of the attention on me and get kicked out. I would write poetry and give them to women I thought I'd never see again confessing my undying love to three different young women I had crushed

on. I would tell them my confessions of love, for teenage poets need muses, and my muses were all teenage girls. They were sincerely beautiful souls so I bared my soul to them in writing before I left in the wind. I let them know that they were my fantasies come to life, the breath of poetry in my dry lungs, the art on my blank lifeless walls. Then, like so many times before, we were off as a family on the run, like nomadic natives, our entire existence in a truck, our entirety from start to present, all in a truck, barreling down the highway towards Post Texas, hours from Hobbs New Mexico and my best of friends, right smack dab in a small crap hole of a town founded by the guy who invented breakfast cereal. A complete nut job, C.W. Post had so many nervous breakdowns he was constantly institutionalized, where he was introduced to the rudimentary formulas of cereal, which they thought would cure insanity. Good shits make for sane people. So he got right in the head, got out, and made a town to make his own cereal in. That town now had an institution for correction as well, and that was why we were on our way to take up residency there so my father could beat the shit out of inmates and provide for us. Post Texas, where my life would change in so, so many ways then, and every other time I returned after leaving.

#### **Chapter 4. Choking In Sleep Paralysis While Bacon Is Being Made**

Our family arrived in Post Texas on a cold rainy day. Which was fitting because it is another gloomy town inside of a large crater, surrounded by miles and miles of cotton fields, oil field sites

and generally nothing. The town literally has cobblestone streets still and most of the family trees there go straight up without any branches if you know what I mean. Well that is what I was told anyway, and now we were a part of the fold. Out of all the places in the world, my dad picked there. I couldn't wait to see the Adams family type high school shit that would occur at the institution I would be attending. I just knew it would be a difficult start, when the first day of school arrived and my dad informed me that the town was small enough for me to walk to school, even though it was freezing out and I didn't have any idea where the hell the school was. He said walk so I did, very slowly, and was late in my brand new Pantera shirt, which upon getting to the school, was informed by several country ass teachers that they made it against school dress code to wear any band t shirts to school, so I was forced to turn my shirt inside out for the remainder of the day and look stupid while being new. No one would talk to me, they all treated me like I was a leper and my face was peeling off. I was dressed entirely different from most of the people in this little town, (inside out shirts aside,) while most of them were pretty normal and into sports, I was like a skater heathen who immediately attracted the unwanted attention of the truancy officer. I carried a notebook around for my poetry as always, and mostly stayed to myself, smoking weed out by the school storage sheds and meandering into classes when I chose to. The school truancy officer was always a step behind me, however, making my life hell. I would find him deliberately seeking me out, cat and mouse style. Once I even found him waiting for me at my locker, with a dog, a fucking old hound dog! "My dog smells drugs in your locker, I'm gonna have to search it." He said with a sneer, like every morning, so I tossed every single book and object in there out on the floor, every morning, "Pick it all up when you're finished and find NOTHING." I said as I walked off pretending to go to the library. Which was actually more like a big closet full of books and not a library, it did have a few computers though to get online. No wonder they were all idiots

here, no one even read and they didn't even have enough access to the world wide web. In fact when they gave me the required reading list, I had read most of the books on it three years earlier as a freshman at Beeville high. I literally read them all, save for "On Walden Pond," and our teacher hadn't even read it. I made up an essay on it and passed, the rest I tested for on the school website and passed all of the online courses, so I basically finished all there was to High school English, every bit. It was so easy, they were miles behind me there, academically. Except for math, I still sucked at that, and was still out of the saxophone kick, in fact it had somehow disappeared along the way, probably pawned by my parents for cash. One particularly dreary Post morning one of the cheerleaders from a wealthy oil field family, you know the bratty really entitled sort, came up and asked me if my notebook was full of spells and sorcery, a lot of the kids in the lower classes at school thought I was into spells and voodoo, and even some adults in town thought I was into witchcraft and was writing my own unholy bible, they really believed that! I lied and told her yea I am into the occult, I have mastered demons, but this is just a book of thoughts and poems that keep me sane from all of the spells I've cast. She then asked me if I could put a hex on another cheerleader for her one that was trying to get all of the attention shifted to her. I told her yes of course, to look dark and mysterious to a pretty girl, shit I'd say anything she wanted. For a price. The price being a date. She agreed, but wanted a page as proof so I tore out a random poem without even seeing which one and gave it to her. After a sincere promise to put a curse on some other ditzy small town rich girl, we parted ways after trading numbers. The next day my father got a call from the school midday and was told that I was no longer welcome there, that I was seen as a threat to the school and staff and that I should finish my senior year by getting my G.E.D. and leaving school. The reason mainly being, a poem that I had given away fell into the wrong hands and was misunderstood. Apparently I had given her a poem that was misconstrued as abnormal

thinking in a small town and put them on high fucking alert. Kicked out of school right before graduation. Now this was right after the Columbine massacres, so people were on code red already all of the damn time, especially if you were a weird ass kid, or shit even if you had a pair of Doc Martins on. In fact, when the massacre happened and I was living in Hobbs still, they rounded up all of our crazy asses along with any kid that was different, or weird, or even slightly off and forced us to talk to the school therapist, just to make sure we would not do the same out of sick inspiration from those kids killing off their fellow students with oozyes and bombs. Well this backwards little town took it a step farther and just kicked me right the hell out. Must have been a good poem, I never saw it again, or even know which one it was, but it cost me twelve years of education. The next day, the mother of the little tart cheerleader came by to give me their apology for what had happened, and said that she and her husband had fought to have them let me remain in school, while my parents had simply just rolled over on it. Tan blonde cheer mom from Tennessee told my parents that the poem did not seem that bad to her, and that they had definitely misconstrued it, she thought it was harmless and wanted for Tif and I to be friends even. Either way I was already out of school, and working on a plan. A master escape plan to flee this shit hole. My plan was actually to sleep on my friend's pullout couch as much as I could, at first then form a better plan. My father was of the sound mind that I needed to get a job or hit the pavement. I did not want to work and toil in that little town, but I tried to appease them, hanging out with Tif and going to the mall, listening to music while I cruised around with her and her much older gay friend who would let me crash on the couch when my parents would kick me out for staying out with her too long. I only had met a few guys that I was cool with in the short time I was in school, but luckily I was very cool with them and they would always pick me up to party in the country, usually in an empty cow pasture freezing your balls off. So after much consideration, many failed

attempts to bang Tif, followed by drug fueled nights in the cemetery, followed by many sleepless nights kicked out of the house sleeping in the town laundromat, or hiding in unlocked cars to sleep while getting out of the cold, breaking into people's homes eating from people's fridges while they were off at work, and pretty much living as a social outcast from my family and the entire town like a rebel yeti. I left. I decided it would be better if I was just subtracted from the equation. I took a Greyhound bus after working at a construction company for one month back to Beeville Texas to stay with my friend Michael, I had found Michael's phone number which was the same still and after reconnecting made a plan to allow me to stay in his room and retake my senior year there In Pettus. My friends from band and school would already be graduating by the time I got there but the following year I would be able to at least redo my last year in a place I was familiar with.

Seeing how I was now the object of many rumors in Post Texas, one being that I was starting a cult under the bridge, that I was homeless and eating the town cats and sacrificing them. I even heard that I was a serial killer in the making and people were afraid of me. Pretty much everyone had something to say about me except for the last person who would hang out with me, and he was a kid a twelve year old boy who was a chicano from Chicago, a mutual friend had told him I was crazy and cool like him and was kicked out of school like him, only he was kicked out for bringing a gun to school, a fake one. So he thought I was a former gang member and liked me so I did a lot of cocaine with his little crazy ass and smoked weed with him, him and a crazy twenty two year old native American oil field hand who called me brother. We became a little gang of miscreants, and I basically stayed with Adam until I left the town cause he was older and had his own shack of a house on the outside of Post. In fact, the day before I left town, Adam's actual brother had saved my life while I was helping with some construction to fund my bus trip to Beeville. I nearly fell off of a two hundred foot high roof onto solid concrete. Pretty much instant death no matter how much

cocaine you're on, I am sure death was stomping mad that day when Adam's acne scarred uncle Joe caught me before I fell. I told him that I owed him a night of drinking, so that night he took me to get a tattoo, my first of many actually, so I bought all of the beer and crank, and we stayed up all night laughing. Those were the only people who saw the real me, and nicknamed me Poet, or "La Poeta." The poet. Without so much as a backwards glance, I caught the midnight Greyhound out of there. Funny thing, after that, they stopped using Post as a bus station pickup, and never stopped there again. It was fate, once more ushering me into a new beginning on the wings of change. I was once more on a journey, seeking the poetry that I once housed inside of my rage. The poetry that kept me rambling onward down the road. During the long bus ride to Pettus Texas all I could really think about was the cheerleader that had gotten my ass kicked out of school. I had come to cherish our time together even if it was unlikely I would be with a rich man's daughter who had actually gotten to know a gentler version of myself, we spent a lot of time in the cemetery, laying on the graves together talking about the universe, I even went with her to a new years party. That night her gay friend gave me a ride home and happened to get pulled over by the police, who arrested him for a D.W.I. they took me in as well. I remember my father came and picked me up, I was not looking forward to hearing how disappointed he was. Even worse was that I had not even had a drop of alcohol. For once, I was sober. I was just with Tif all night trying to get some, and never even drank. I sat there surrounded by cops making fun of me, because the guy who gave me a ride home was the town homosexual, so naturally they were joking about me and the guy in the other room saying like I was looking for a blow job not a ride. I was going down on girls since kindergarten days, I would never even think of hooking up with a guy. I took the ridicule though, they didn't know me. They would never know me, so their small town assumptions meant very little to me. Deep in thought, I finally arrived in Beeville. I stepped off of the bus into the coastal afternoon, and felt closer to home than in many years. I felt so good that I didn't even remember to get my luggage off of the bus. Which had nearly immediately departed since I didn't



mention luggage as I exited, leaving me standing there with only that which was in my pockets. Luckily the gas station/ bus station attendant was sympathetic to my young plight, and he let me use the phone to call michael. In those days we memorized each other's phone numbers because we only had regular phones so I knew how to get a hold of many people by memory, especially by pay phone. Before too long Michael and his brother baby Joe arrived and scooped me up. Many of the little towns in that area are a stone throw away from one another, so I was glad it had not taken very long. When we got back into town, Michael and I stopped by all of my old friends' houses to say hey and let them know that I had returned. It hadn't even crossed my mind that I was back home among old friends, exactly right around the time we would have been graduating together. Except they would be walking in a few days without me. As we smoked out of a bong and laughed, Michael and Micah and Lee let me know about all of the great parties that were coming up soon in the small town life, and that I was coming back right on time. Michael was looking forward to having me live with his family but this time as a brother, and Michael's parents had been taken a little off guard but agreed that I could stay there but I had to help on the little farm, and of course, finish my high school education. Which was perfect to me, I wanted to graduate there even if it was with the next class. I was just glad to be far from Post Texas, the birthplace of cereal hell flakes and cursed truancy officers, as far as I was concerned. After a few days of settling in, it was time for my old friends to graduate. It hurt, in a way, watching each of them cross that stage without me. However it was good to see all of them happier than I had ever seen them. Directly afterwards as the evening waned, we picked up some eggs, toilet paper, and paintballs, then went on a rampage all over several neighboring towns, toilet papering trees, egging cars, and shooting paintballs at doorways and stray people. The four of us then met up at our clubhouse, and gathered supplies. Xanax. Check. Schnapps. Check. Whiskey. Check. Weed. Double check. The night was ours. Now I don't remember a damn thing after that as I was fed many pills by Michael's cousin, but I was told it was an epic night. I had taken seven bars of Xanax, a valium, then smoked and drank all night. I was told I GOT INTO A FIGHT, was

in a swimming pool fully clothed with a bunch of hot older girls and a few from our class, kissed my school crush from the cross country team, and tried to walk up a ladder with no hands, just to get onto the roof to sneak in a window when we got home at four in the morning. I was flabbergasted. Michael's mother was calling us Richie and Bob the next day, saying they corrupted me. It was great to be there though, it felt like no time had been lost. Michael's dad took me to get a job after a few days since Michael was going to be away at the college in Beeville Coastal Bend College actually, living there in the dorms, they figured a job would keep me occupied before the school year started. So I got my first job cooking at Dairy Queen. It was pretty laid back, most of the other staff were related to Michael or knew me from school. I was beginning to feel like a normal life was in store for me, and was with the best people that I knew that could ensure that happened. The summer was gradually passing me by, friends who had just graduated would come by D.Q. to say hi and get a blizzard, and in the evenings I would retire to the homestead and hang out with baby Joe, Michael's older brother, who many of us looked up to. He was a star athlete in his day, and was old enough to buy booze. He and I began hanging out a great deal actually in Michael's absence, smoking cigarettes and drinking zimmas with his uncles. Everything was going fine until the night Baby Joe wanted me to be his wingman, and go out with his ex sister in law of all people, so he could score with her hot blonde friend. I was still technically a virgin, and Missy, his ex sister in law, was once married to their oldest brother who was in prison, well she was an experienced older woman around twenty three years old to my seventeen and she did not seem to mind that I was fresh out of the wrapper, very much young and dumb despite my high I.Q. and education. Young, dumb and full of spunk. Despite all of the red flags I went along with it, trying to be a good wingman. Something in me said it was wrong, but my hormones said it was alright. We drank and we laughed, the four of us, until nearly five in the morning. Then, everyone retired to their own private areas of the house and I lost my virginity consensually to Missy, as Baby Joe fell asleep after striking out miserably, I lost my virginity and he didn't get nothing, even though all of this was his idea. I felt the guilt sinking in

though at the thought of violating something sacred in the family that I loved so much. After that night, Missy began finding reasons to visit the farmhouse, way more often especially since she had never visited at all before. Let alone bring their infant grandchild that I had not even known about, but making it much worse was the fact that she would bring the baby to distract them, so that we could secretly have sex upstairs. She would spend the night even several times and say it was because she missed their incarcerated son and wanted to be around the family with the baby, but really it was to sleep with me after everyone had passed out. Right as school was about to begin, she drove up in her brand new Dodge pickup, and told me I had to move out with her and go stay with her at her grandmother's, all so that she would not be alone. Little did I know she had gotten kicked out and decided I should be with her despite everything. I blindly followed, and Michael's family, with bewildered faces, watched me leave with her. I never saw any of them again. I went with Missy, and we stayed with her grandma well into the winter, then I moved on and went to stay with my own grandparents after being jobless and simply smoking cigarettes all day and night with her there, basically just living simply in yet another decrepit farm houseway out in the country, in Runge Texas. Missy was really torn up about it, but we did not have a choice. That was how our intense short lived romance ended, and yet another era for me began. I was love sick for weeks however, after moving in with my grandparents. They were very accommodating since I was their first grandchild, at first though I mostly spent all of my time staring at insects in one of the five beautiful gardens that surrounded their property. I hardly had an appetite at all, I didn't even want to talk to anyone even though the only people that I really knew there were them and several childhood friends, I actually did not even know until I was an adult that Sabinal, Texas was even a town. I thought it was a place where my grandparents lived, and there were no other people living there at all. I fought the urge to make constant long distance calls to try to talk to Missy because during this time you had to pay a lot to talk to anyone that wasn't local, it was ten cents or more an hour and the hours add up and I would get into trouble for racking up whopping four dollar charges in long distance calls, when I was actually

brave enough to call a few times, but still you get the idea that it added up quickly. Finally I got through that funk and ended up spending a lot of time with some locals I had met while visiting Sabinal during the childhood summer times when we were allowed Summer trips after escaping from school's grasp. My friends were there to be shoulders to headbang against like most teen boys are, you are usually your pals psychiatrist and guidance growing up when there is no one else to talk to, we also of course smoked a ton of reggie weed. It was nice being back in a familiar place, even though life in a small retirement town is antiquated and very droll. Life moves at the most gradual pace, the towns folk even drive slower than normal, as there is absolutely no rush at all. No rush at all, that is until you get super bored with your pals and blow your entire trust fund on cocaine, then the view becomes blurred as life speeds way up. Before you know it you're doing blow at nine in the morning on a Tuesday while stealing from your day job to fund it. The boys and I were pulling all nighters nearly every single night, rain or shine, cold or hot. You could always find our group tailgating on a backroad, or cruising looking for girls, with an eight ball and a case of beer. This went on for much longer than I care to admit, and was at times the best fun I ever had up until then. All of that excitement definitely helped me forget about my broken heart, but it also cost me a lot of respect. My grandparents kicked me out, after living there for less than six months because of the endless partying, stealing from them, and being a nuisance, then after moving in with one of the guys I had known for years, he even kicked me out, because I was stealing pocket change from their kids piggy bank for gas money. I was a wreck. I ended up on the streets, with a newly acquired drivers license, a newly leased used car, with no place to live, and no friends to fall back on anymore. My coping mechanism for my lovesick heart had left me even worse off and now I couldn't even do that. I had a last ditch effort, a glorious ace in the hole. I still had one last cocaine dealer slash friend left, named Woz, who took me in as a mercy of the cold, wet streets. Woz gave me a room and food just as long as I tried his product for him daily and let him know whether it was pure or cut. I hastily agreed of course, so he took me with him that night back to Uvalde Texas, where he had a stash house which

was an old trailer on the outside of the city. On the drive to Uvalde he was telling me about his brothers at arms in a street gang, and told me they were his true family, that I could eventually meet them one day, and even though they were all Mexican, they would probably accept me because I was a real one. Who was always down for the cause.

### **Chapter 5. Tropical Spectrums Seen Through A Yellow Haze By A Third Eye**

Life has a weird feel to it every time you have to start over, and well, you know, open a new chapter in your life. There is a strange luster to everything, and an excitement that pops up in your loins. I

didn't really care though about any of that, I have started over countless times by now, all I wanted was more cocaine to numb my mind. Send my essence into the void. We arrived at his old trailer the next evening, having made some stops around the border first to get some product, he took me inside and showed me to my empty, drafty room down the old hallway with old blue shag carpet that stunk of mildew. Woz was showing me his master bedroom he shared with Julia, his woman and his old Nintendo, when there was a knock at the door. Woz looked out the window and panicked, "The Fucking cops are here man, someone must have rolled over on me, probably my dad!" He gave me the stash, to hide, then went out to see what the issue was. I don't know what occurred but I do know as soon as he went outside they arrested his ass. Literally as soon as we got there, Woz was gone. I, however, was not, and was left there slack jawed in an empty trailer with a whole bunch of cocaine. I stayed there for nearly a week, sleeping in an armchair and doing coke, smoking weed, and drinking lots of milk to counter the effects. After that week was up, some members of his gang came by to see if Woz had sold the cocaine that they had been fronting. I told them what the situation was and ended up leaving with one of them, to stay in a little bit better of a trap house while I helped them make the money back that I said Woz had lost, meaning the cocaine. They did this because they knew Woz would want for me to help with production and distribution, well they pretty much just assumed it. Later that night after selling much more than anticipated due to my calculations, I was involved in an orgy, and afterwards was told that since I had been let into their lifestyle, that I would have to be initiated into their organization. After I kind of reluctantly agreed, I was taken outside and had the shit beaten out of me by five different large Mexican men, for five long, super long minutes. Then the leader of the organization took my bruised and bloodied face in his hands and told me that I was now in their family, and they would die for me, that they knew what happened to Woz, and were going to collect when Woz used his one call and got through to them, he told them that the product

had been left with his really smart childhood friend, who could help flip it. They then deduced the risk and decided that I should be a part of the group, because I would be useful, especially being white. I was basically in a mafia now, with little choice but to make back the money that they had no clue was actually missing because of me doing so much, but I did it, I pulled it off and flipped it by getting rid of one supplier and when it was short upping the cost for getting smaller twenties. For the next six months my life was selling drugs, carefree sex, and constantly moving from safe house to safe house to keep away from any possible undercover cops looking to bust up our dealing. They kept me supplied with free weed, cocaine, and pussy and I would make them money. It was a dark time for me despite the extreme highs, Woz had set it all up, even though he had no idea I had been doing the coke and cutting it with no doze to keep it at weight. I was in, and was pretty much untouchable as I worked my way up outsmarting the others, and avoiding retaliation by doing a good job. I was getting in a lot of trouble as far as my family could tell though. I would visit them with black eyes, and busted lips, I am sure they knew what the score was though, as gang and mafia activity there is unusually high, close to Mexico's border it is pretty much unavoidable. I was doing my usual business one fall evening when the person who owned the house myself and several young members were staying in suddenly and most unexpectedly evicted us immediately, no month's notice no nothing. To make matters worse I had no place to go save for the curb with them. We tried to get the organization to get us a place there but all of the safe houses had been busted. All that I had now filled a backpack with clothes, a jacket, and some weed to smoke, about two hundred dollars and thats all. Finally some of the older members did what they could though and had some brothers from a few towns over come pick us up and take us to stay even closer to the border. We were to be given a small trailer to stay in, but the price would be we had to help them move cocaine through there and traffick people into the United states, as in be sellers day and night, and also help with the human

trafficking that would transpire there. I knew it was going to be pretty dark times ahead indeed, I even started praying again in my personal time. It truly was touch and go the next few weeks, avoiding rivals, undercover police, and border patrol sometimes all in the same night. I started devising a plan to get out of there though, I knew this would only end badly so I started cutting the cocaine again and selling small amounts on the side to save up some escape money for myself. I would stay up all night selling to the local brotherhood, and also to the crack fiends that never slept, then sleep small amounts during the day while someone else took over only to wake and do it all again. After a few weeks of this, one cold day I took my bag and my cash and simply walked off. I was going to walk straight out of that little border town and hitchhike back to Sabinal then see if my grandparents would drive me home to stay with my parents since it had been years since I had been home. The only reason I even considered it was because it had been a few years since I had been to Post but it seemed far, far better than staying by the border facing a brutal gang related death or prison within the mafia's grasp. I walked for about half a mile through alleys and down dirt roads until I was nearly out of town, got all the way to a small farm on the outskirts when the brothers found me and cornered me behind a building. I was blind folded and thrown into the trunk, then driven down a long bumpy road. I knew that this was not going to end well, my adrenaline was pumping, my legs were shaking and I was pouring sweat. Couldn't see, and was taking a lot of hits from the bumpy ass rough trunk ride. We stopped moving, my heart was racing into my throat, when I was savagely pulled from the trunk, hood ripped from my head, only to find myself beside a shallow hole in the middle of a corn field, of which there are countless in south Texas, and this was possibly one of many pre dug holes, I knew right away this was it. This hole in this corn field is where my mortal remains would never be found. The two men who I knew, not well mind you, but knew nonetheless, cocked their guns, and were about to drop me into the hole with a body full of



holes when I shouted out, “call Mimo, call Mimo right now!” I was drenched and muddy now, sweat was pouring down my face and lips, I felt urine surging trying to pour out, but I maintained. “Mimo would not allow this, I have been making him a shit load of money...” They had no idea, in fact not many people did, but came to find out. I had grown up with the leader of their organization, a man named Ismael who was seldom seen or present, always out attending to his own schedules. I had only recently discovered that he had been made the new supreme ruler of this set, and knew that he was my only ticket out. We had shared meals, shared secrets and even shared a roof before, so I know it would be no easy thing for him to sign my death warrant. They had merely thought I was someone trying to get around the blood in and blood out vow. With the flip of a burner phone and a lengthy elevated conversation, they came back and told me that they were to let me go, and also give me a ride back to Sabinal, plus a thousand dollars for my troubles. By that night I was back in one of the many gardens my grandparents owned, contemplating my next steps. Always a step ahead of death’s shadow, always a step behind my own. I knew my grandparents would not want to doddle as they were still not too fond of me. So my grandmother loaded up my stuff the next day, and with my great grandfather as co pilot we began the long ride to north west Texas. There are many small towns along the way, and at times endless miles of great nothingness. To this day it is still reminiscent of early days. Crossing a great expanse in some vehicle, hoping it turns out well, as there are not many places to seek aid or refuge. It took Seven hours to return to Post with my grandmother’s slow steady driving. You can be blind and know when the journey is at an end, as I immediately knew we were close by the rotten egg smell of oil in the air from all of the oil field pump jacks working in unison, dredging up the cold black fossil fuel from the depths of the earth, that and from the ominous towering electric windmills buzzing and whirring like power lines, they stand like monoliths and are always on the horizon as far as you can see in that flatland. Monoliths of energy that spread across

ranches alongside the all consuming oil fields. I was glad to be away from the mindlessness that had enveloped me there on the border. The insanity that comes from being able to do what you want whenever you want to because of corrupt power and fear. We had weapons, drugs, and people to push over. Money coming in constantly, and all the women Adonis could ever want. Only now it was on to the simple life once more, watching the hours slowly pass by. I knew my father would make me work. As soon as I got there his first words were probably going to be “you better find a job if you’re going to be living here.” I DO have a plan father, I kept telling myself. I have a plan. I didn’t have any kind of plan. If anything I would just find the few people that I know and see if they knew about any jobs, and places to stay with cheap rent. I was back in Post for a few days and landed a job at the nearby Allsup’s, selling gasoline and deep fried burritos, so stage one of my intricate plan was already in motion. I then found Adam, my old accomplice and drinking buddy, and was able to get a room at his house, paying monthly rent there and even helping him with his job in the oil field on the weekends. After several weeks I acquired an old, old beat up land boat, and was back to being somewhat mobile in my ‘88 Cadillac Eldorado. That beast was a boat on wheels. After a month being home, I was able to level up and get a job at the federal prison nearby, I said screw it maybe they will hire me since my dad worked there for many years, and they did hire me, pretty much for that reason, and I became an honest to God officer making a whole lot of money. I had lied of course about having no gang ties, and ended up babysitting violent and rich criminals for twelve hours at a time, for lots of over time. Putting my life on the line in another way on the opposite spectrum of selling drugs and aiding illegal aliens, basically for a big check and insurance. The long hours in the prison at night felt like being in a submarine, alone with your deepest thoughts while the killers, rapists, and thieves slept. The tediousness of counting the prisoners, all two thousand of them, every five hours, was enough to give you a headache. We managed it though, the twenty of us who worked

the night shift. I worked with a motley rabble of misfits that only belonged on the night shift, older people who cared more about their next cigarette than the security of the prison. There were times when I was glad they were all asleep, for if they really wanted to they could overthrow the place at night when the weakest and newest worked all in about half a minutes time is all it would take, and we, the guards, would all be obliterated. It would be a real massacre too, if they ever chose to crush us, being so outnumbered. It was a great job until I was fired for being too friendly to the inmates, which really meant I wasn't popular with my fellow officers because I didn't abuse the prisoners, and was late a few times, mostly because of my old car which had no headlights to drive at night, and also was a gas guzzler that died randomly at any moment. So naturally I started selling weed and ended up getting in close with a local family, they were known as the town trouble makers and even had their own African American clique, the West Texas Thugs. I bought a good amount of cocaine and weed from the last of my prison checks and had them selling it for me. It was going ok for a while despite some minor glitches with them doing the coke more than selling it, around that time was when I met one of their young female cousins, Terry. Terry was eighteen and finishing school and I was twenty one, when we started dating, I was getting lazy with keeping up with my money though and the boys were still pulling some of the antics I had pulled before, such as doing most of the product with little regards to how the guy who bought it was gonna react and not caring at all. So before long I was broke and out of product, looking for a job with a son on the way, because I had been hooking up with Terry, pretty much all the time by then. Terry graduated early, because of Isaiah Khristopher our son who was born on August 2nd, it was a great day for me, my son was going to carry my name and he would be a great, strong man. I landed a job making sandwiches, so that was something, and we were going to move in and stay with my family so that we could have some help with the little meanwhile saving up for a better place. For a little while things were going well, it was

almost routine, work, then help with Isaiah. I had gotten a job as a nurses assistant at the town nursing home for the elderly, and was taking classes to be certified when it seemed like postpartum depression overcame Terry, because she left me and decided to go on her own. She moved out of my parent's house with Isaiah, and was set on striking out on her own without us. I was still working and acquired a large Dodge econoline van, with a table in the middle and small bed in the back. It was basically a small R.V. that wouldn't fit anywhere you tried to park, it was way more reliable than the old Cadillac that I scrapped. I was in limbo, in my mind though, waiting for some event to turn my life around, give me change, give me purpose. I was waiting to see if Terry would want to try and be a family again for our son's sake, and at the same time wanted to search for a new life far from where I was confined. This crappy life in a place I swore never to return to. This continued for a while, then my mother and father decided to keep Isaiah after he was constantly left there so his mother could party. I was working and basically just there to help also, and his mother was allowed visitation. Terry decided to kidnap Isaiah one day, setting many bad events in motion, first and worst event being that my family kicked me the fuck out for letting her kidnap him. Or so they thought, as I was in total shock as well. So I stayed on the street awhile, stayed in a few crack houses also, begging for food and money in town, wandering around like a vagabond. During this time, all seemed lost to me, until I ended up moving in with a good friend, Jeremy, who had a small house on the hill with his mother, father and brother. Jeremy let me crash on the couch, which was ok with me, I didn't need a lot of space and didn't own a lot of stuff. I was working odd jobs and as luck would have it ended up being the singer in his brother's band, trying something new that I never knew I had the courage to do. I started skateboarding again, making music with their band which was called Another Day Undecided. I started feeling artistic again, at the same time I was still trying to be a good father, but One day I was served with papers basically saying my parents were suing Terry and I for the rights to

Isaiah. Which we both lost, since my parents had a very high priced lawyer, the thing that bothered me the most was, they did not even try to involve me, it was like he became their kid, and I wasn't even given the option to assist in his raising, despite how hard I had tried the year before to keep that family together. Even through the constant uphill work battle, the differences between her family and mine, and the struggle of being against the world when you are angry at everything for not going your way. The band and I started making more music and even performing some, so I put all of my energy into that, hoping that it would pay off. We performed some pretty large local shows, had some merchandise and a song on the radio, but ultimately the music didn't pay off, and I was eventually kicked out of the band, because of conflicts of interest, then not long after that, I found myself once more working with Adam in the oilfield. Now that is truly hard, hard labor. Labor that leaves you exhausted, bruised, cut up and extremely filthy. It is easily the dirtiest job on the planet, you ruin everything you touch, you always smell like rotten eggs, but it pays decently, especially when there is nothing left to try in your small town, it is the bottom of the barrel for most people. Oddly enough though I was working for the father of the girl who had gotten me kicked the hell out of high school, the only nice thing about it was having a job with a good old friend to work with. We drank a lot after work and would get into fights, sometimes with each other, sometimes with other people. Then wake up at five in the morning to do the grind of the oil field. Again. This went on for nearly half a year, until I went to a Halloween party one night with a good friend of mine named Tayler. Actually we never even made it to the party that we had intended to go to, we met up with some college girls we had met on Myspace, after getting lost only to discover we finally found what we thought was the right place, and it was not the right place at all. It was some other random halloween party that the cops were already raiding just as we were arriving, and right as we were pulling up there also happened to be hundreds of college kids pouring out of a house onto the street, trying desperately to

outrun the small amount of Lubbock cops there at the scene. Tayler and I were in a loud rice burner with Tayler revving his lawnmower engine hard, he kept it up until somehow we got the attention of several young ladies wearing dresses and fairy wings, who told us about a nearby party at a motel. I was smitten at first sight of the masked fairy that kept smiling at me, so I told Tayler, we have to follow them to this party. We just had to, I told him that it felt too much like fate. Felt like every accident of my life had led me to that point. That was the night, my children, that I met the love of my life, Leah, the one that got away. Tayler and I followed the two girls in their saturn meandering down side roads this way and that way, Tayler's loud muffler screaming into the night as we raced down the streets of Lubbock to the motel they had booked. It was there with a handful of people from their little town, and my pal, that I drank and laughed the night away. Halloween is always better in a strange place, with strangers. So, all night we stayed in that room drinking cheap wine and smoking the reefer, I did voice impressions and talked about my aspirations, all while wearing Nicole's fairy wings which I had plundered. I was doing my best to impress her, despite the fact that she had a man named Jeff back in her hometown. We lasted pretty much all night, partying like cinderella until four in the morning, when I finally got her to trust me enough to tell me what her name is, up until that point I had no idea her name is Leah we were actually never introduced as I had been looking for some other college girls when I found her, also found out that she was from the town forty miles away on the opposite side of my town, a little dust bowl gem called Snyder. It was by far better than Post anyway, they had a junior college at least and more job opportunities, and way prettier girls that weren't incest kids. I was smitten by her since we met in that chaos of cops and kids. Had to follow her to that party, and then decided I had to have her. I pretty much immediately forgot the girl I was supposed to have met from Myspace, and only wanted to win over Leah's heart. I didn't have a cell phone, or email, but I did offer my Myspace handle to her, to somehow remain in contact with each other. We hardly left one another's side the entire time, and ended up falling

asleep as the early morning cartoons came on. I woke up to the fact that I had completely forgotten the fact that I had dismissed Tayler at some point in the early hours, so I had to get a ride home from the girls I had just met. I was so lucky that they were even going in the same direction. So on top of hanging out with Leah the entire night, I also was able to take a forty minute car ride with her and get to know her even more. I was hardly concerned with the fact that she already had a man, i had stolen a few girlfriends before They dropped me off at my current haunt. The last thing she said to me was that she would keep in touch. That was the start of our romance. Leah ended up leaving her boyfriend wouldn't ya know, and would pick me up anytime she passed through Post, and even made a few late night excursions in a stolen car to meet up with me. I went Christmas shopping with her, as well as galavanting about Lubbock to random parties or get-togethers. Leah would even take her mother's car, usually when her Mustang was having issues, just to see me. After a few more months together I found out that Leah came from a very prominent family with oil field money. They had land, horses, cars, you name it. Needless to say, her step father probably would not like a poor boy from Post talking to his wealthy stepdaughter from Snyder kind of shit. Didn't really matter though, that girl was destined for bigger things than that little town or myself. Around the beginning of the year Leah informed me that she would soon be leaving to Burbank California, the heart of Hollywood, to go to a prominent school to become a makeup artist. I was pretty much heart broken, but insisted that she write to me, and call when she could spare the time. I was broken inside, absolutely broken, Leah had quickly become my entire world, as well as the only distraction I had from not being in the band anymore, not being able to see my son like I would like to, and generally not having much in the way of a future anyway. Things weren't going my way all around it seemed, but I was still working in the oilfield at least making some money, still covered in sludge daily. It always seems like there is less gravity on Earth when you are young, and as you get older and full of more heartache, the greater the gravity grows, but I felt ancient already right

then and there. Leah was off to Hollywood shortly after she informed me, learning how to do special effects, and cosmetic makeup. I was there stuck in the little town life, morose and smoking lots of weed and taking muscle relaxers to knock myself out, I would drink a whole lot of Codeine and promethazine as well, anything to make the days pass into night, anything to escape my reality. I was in a pretty bad downward spiral when I was given the option to move back in with my parents and help out with my son. So i gave it a shot, still writing handwritten letters to Leah every week, calling her when I could, since I didn't have a flip phone. I did this for a few months, and things were going ok but my parents kicked me out over some bullshit. So once more, I was homeless on the streets of Post, and even Adam couldn't save me this time, he had moved in with family members as well and couldn't spare any room. His family had come through for me many times though, like I was a brother to them, even bonding me out of jail when they barely had the money to spare, so I didn't hold it against them. Still, I had nowhere to go, and slept in the bed of an abandoned truck on the side of the road for a few nights, then I went by Terry's family's home, looking for Isaiah, and ended up finding Terry and no Isaiah. I told them the situation, and Terry's aunt took pity on me, and let me crash at her brother's abandoned house. Her brother was locked up and the house was in disarray, often with as many as ten of Terry's cousins squatting, smoking meth, or drinking until they passed out. There was some electricity in a few of the rooms, which was boosted from the nearby pole not paid for, running water in one bathroom but only cold water, and the back bathroom didn't even have a roof. It was better than the back of a truck though, so I would clean it up during the day, and hang my sink washed clothes on the back line when I had to do laundry. We never had food so I went back to breaking into houses to take cans of food or frozen meats to bring back and cook for those of us that were hiding there and had a mind to eat and not just do meth. Cops would often come by at night and shine flashlights into the boarded up windows, looking for the meth dealers posted up there. It was nuts, I would boil water to have a hot bath in the morning, and



sleep on a dirty brown stained sheetless mattress during the nights. Sometimes Terry would show up drunk and ask me questions about our lives together, or ask me to sleep with her, then leave to find a new man to bother. I don't know how long it went on, but I was finally able to check my Myspace page randomly one day while at the library and discovered a message from Leah. She was asking me to go to Hollywood and stay with her awhile, to get out of Post, even though she had no idea I was destitute, she had immediately thought of me after completing her makeup courses and had decided to give me the chance to start over with her there in the heart of SOHO. I immediately replied yes, a million times yes. I was going to go with her to Holly Weird and try to be a writer or something, shit the most remedial job in Hollywood would be better than the best job you could ever have in the small town I was in . Leah bought a plane ticket for me, and in several days time I was there, taking in the beautiful scenery that is southern California from the landing Southwest jet. There was so much to take in there, so much, it was a shock to the senses driving around on freshly popped Vicodin with Nicole in her Mustang GT. It was like a dream, the rushing cars, the city lights at night, the constant buzz from celebrities, I was drunk on the fun we were having. Making love for hours, drinking shots of vodka on the terrace looking onto the endless lights that are Los Angeles and north Hollywood. We smoked the best reefer, and rubbed elbows with stars, I was even in a few photo shoots for a big smirnoff ad. The fun and expenses came with a price especially when it was harder for me to get a job than I had anticipated. We would have violent fights, fights that only twenty year olds in jealous love with each other were capable of having. Throwing chairs, clawing at each other's faces, I think it was the drugs we were on that fueled much of it, and then the make up sex would make it go away like a fresh start. We got kicked out of a few places where we were living for it though, and ended up living on Leah's trust fund for a while just to get by which strained us as well. She would work making movies on the production teams, and I finally landed a low paying job at Toys-R-Us. I met so many celebrities there,

it was cool, but it just was not enough to live well in that environment made for the super rich. Leah and I ended up moving back to San Antonio Texas, we somehow remained together even though we fought the entire way home, all three days we were in that car making our way to Texas we fought. Smoking medicinal weed we had smuggled over the border checkpoint, argued, and made love. We settled in the medical center of San Antonio, in a nice apartment. I was sure she was going to give me the boot, but I guess somehow she still loved me, she kept me around. Leah began working for her father in a dental lab that he owned, while I found a job at a local restaurant. Things moved at that pace for a little while, not in any way perfect, but we had our own sort of harmony. Leah's mother was never really fond of me throughout all of our romance, and would often threaten to take away many of her things, to get her to leave me, but we would always find ways around it. Once I even moved out and she would visit me, then she said screw that and had me move back in, I could start to tell that the fire in our passion was fizzling out though, and that we had hurt each other far too many times. I had a feeling that sooner or later Leah's mother would entice her back into the spoiled rich girl lifestyle, and she would leave me for bigger and better possibilities. It was a real possibility that was always brewing. I was confused at this point, broken, how could someone I had loved so deeply and felt so much passion for, be my enemy now. I thought she was cheating on me as well, as I found a map to a man's house stuffed into the seat of her mustang when we were at the grocery store. When the lies and cheating start, that is always a sign that the end is near. I thought she was truly my destiny, but the end was there for us, truly was too, as she left me just short of my twenty-seventh birthday. Her mother bought an entire clothing store for her to run and manage, as long as she left me and moved back by Snyder. So she did, and I remained in San Antonio, I got a room at an efficient apartment complex near downtown. I moved in and would just stare at my Xbox log in menu on the tv screen and wish it was Leah. Stare at my food and wish it was her, stare at the sky and see her face. I knew I would never

see her again though, as I watched those Mustang tail lights get smaller and smaller. Only in dreams would we ever be close or even talk, ever again. I did not last long on my own, I had too many crippling moments in silence and began to resent silence even more than normal, especially when the silence followed me to work, and while out riding my bike to not think of her, so I ended up moving in with a coworker from the nearby McDonalds where I had gotten a day job as a cook. I would rather be surrounded by my new friends' family and sleep on the couch than sit and suffer in silence. Especially after getting food poisoning before moving in with him. That sealed the deal, feeling like I was dying, throwing up all over myself while having no strength to even drag myself to the bathroom. I just lay there sweating and hallucinating all alone with no family or friends to help me. That pushed me to not want to be alone no matter what. I had no idea what I had signed up for though, living with two people who were absolute slob. While I am a clean freak with crippling O.C.D at times.

### **Chapter 6. Slum Lord And The Thunderous Note From The Sky**

My new roommate's name was Roy, but we all called him wolfie, well Wolfie, Joy, their two adopted pre teen boys, and myself, all shared a one room roach infested apartment downtown, and ate mostly old

Mcdonald's cheeseburgers for every meal. Now on top of all of this, Wolfie was a huge four hundred pound ex homeless guy, who didn't give a shit about much, who would pee on the windows of restaurants as we waited for the bus, or throw up rotgut booze all over without even bending down, a true misfit of the Earth, but we went everywhere together, and smoked a whole lot of shwag together. I didn't mind a whole lot of Wolfies ways, his careless mannerisms that shunned people adopt, but for sure one thing that I never liked was how he and his girlfriend would stack bags of garbage beside the back door until they reached the ceiling. I knew where the roaches came from. From the garbage mountain, and they. Were. Everywhere. It was hard being depressed about lost love in an extremely dirty environment. Really eats away at the mind, but I would hold on, try to maintain. We would hide in the dark afraid some nights as cops would squad in and raid the several adjacent apartments, looking for crack dealers who owned the entire place like some New jack city drug lord housing complex. Eventually the whole place was condemned by the city and we had to go our separate ways so they could tear the shit hole apart, then the roaches really scattered I bet. I just pictured the nights where the roaches would constantly run across my face or get in my ears, and I thought it was good riddance. I moved in with my new found friend Fabian, I had been introduced to Fabian, the radical anti Nazi skinhead who loved to drink and fight, by Wolfie a few weeks prior to our eviction, when we had been randomly raging it up and partying downtown. He was an intense guy, high strung, paranoid, and looked like Russel Crowe, but had a kind streak in him as well so he was ok. I took my bag of clothes, an eight ball of cocaine, and all the courage I could muster and went to live with the brawlers among the slum lord's brood and minions in the compound of moldy wood, cinder blocks, and blood. What better way to get over heartache than to become a person carved from stone, someone who could master pain while raging in the night. To say that living with Fabian was an experience that was unlike any other I had encountered up to that point, would be putting it extremely mildly, in fact at times it was like being in some movie about a psychopath who could flip . We would drink entire cases of cheap vodka dry in a week's

time, smoke filterless cigarettes, and eat tons of BBQ chicken. Fabian literally had a compound encased within an eight foot tall wooden and tin wall with spikes sticking out all over the top. There were surveillance cameras hidden discreetly in trees in the driveway, and within the walls there was a considerable amount of land, and a two story house that was actually split into two separate houses by an outdoor stairway. The house was a labyrinth of doors leading to bigger rooms which lead to another door with a smaller room, and rooms within rooms that were added on later. It was designed to confuse people who had gone there to break in and rob the place, or try to kill Fabian for something out of his past. I later found out that being the one time leader of a large group of radicals, Fabian had acquired a large amount of enemies that would love to say they had finally gotten the best of the guy, even if it was years later. He was at one time legendary in the brawler scene there in San Antonio. Like most war veterans he would brag about his kills when drunk and throw knives hell even forks that would stick in the wall by your head, only to those of us under his harsh tutelage. The man had us punching walls, breaking cinder blocks over our heads, and walking through fire, to shape us into warriors. In fact many of the people that left that fight club house, went on and became M.M.A. fighters, one I know of was actually successful at it. I was simply fighting to remove the pain from my body, by replacing it with a different pain, and because I had no real friends or family there, and desperately wanted to fit in. We became pretty close in that time, close like dysfunctional brothers are and would often sleep in the same room playing left 4 dead until three in the morning. Fabian couldn't sleep unless there were explosions and gun noises going on, so he never slept normally, there was always a loud movie playing in his room, playing simultaneously on his twin fifty five inch flat screens that he had side by side on his wall. I have a real brother, but we were never truly close, after I moved out and moved on we hardly even talked after being roommates for over fifteen years, so for once I wasn't the oldest and knew what it felt like having a slightly older brother. It was a harsh place with harsh people, but I adjusted to the moldy dampness of his house and the endless cycle of people that would

move in and out, most of which were homeless people or hitchhikers passing through. One of these fellows was a cool guy named Chris, who was a seasoned hitchhiker. Chris really was a wanderer, even though he was from a wealthy family, he truly loved to wander the highways and hitchhike, he loved being out on the open road more than being confined to a house or job. We all truly loved it when he came through San Antonio and stopped by the house for a few weeks. Many others would leave shortly after arriving usually due to the unstable moods of Fabian, especially after Fabian beat them up a few times while drunk and coked up. There were really only a few of us that stayed and endured. I really got into karaoke at that time. I'd sneak over to the nearby tiki bar and have a few drinks and sing for several hours, then go back and pretend I was there all along and never had left, mainly because Fabian would always ask me "where are you going?" or "Why do you need to leave?" much like a possessive husband would. I was constantly getting accused of being a spy or secret agent sent to infiltrate and learn what went on in Fabian's headquarters, but I would prove myself innocent every time. I was not able to get much work then, and would pretty much get by with my grandparents help, they would send me a lot of cash for rent etc. but it was usually tough, then one night Fabian decided to do what he thought was a favor for me, to help with my money situation. Fabian took me to a world famous artist's house. I was under the impression that it was for a job, especially since I had begun painting small paintings once more. Fabian knew this wealthy famous man because Fabian used to bodyguard for the artist known as Ruiz, one night my dear friend in the dawn of his work relationship with Ruiz had discovered the homosexual artists hunger for fresh young men, much like a vampire he would lure people in need over so that the nameless fool could be drugged and raped. He would bring Ruiz heteros whom had no idea what was going on, get paid for bringing them there, then take off and leave them there. So basically I was being set up. I was there drinking the finest liquors watching rich gay men do coke out of a large silver bowl, when Fabian whispered to me, "don't share a straw with them, they all have AIDs," I gulped, and looked at the floor. I wasn't sure how I had gotten to this point in

my life, and certainly had no idea what was in store for me. It was like two in the morning when Fabian and Ruiz snuck off and made their little flesh arrangement. I was pretty far gone mentally at that point, and ready to go home. Ruiz came back into the empty room and told me that I was going to model for him to get undressed so that he could paint me. After painting me for about thirty minutes Ruiz then also disrobed and told me that he was ready to please himself. I looked around and didn't see my friend anywhere, all I could see was the short fat famous man's micro penis, intensely small, angrily flaccid, and a look of pure madness on the man's face. I went immediately into the role of a victim tho, and told him, "I will get undressed and let you pleasure yourself but you cannot touch me, and you cannot come near me, if you do, I will definitely kill you here and now." I disrobed and bent over letting him please himself from across the room. Afterwards, and extremely hastily he painted me as a nude model, then threw two hundred dollars at my feet and said "here.. for your rent." I left, feeling so used and filthy confused like a prostitute. Fabian pulled up suddenly, and didn't even look in my direction. I gave him the money, "here..your cut." Was all that I muttered, I was sure that this would be my life for a while, as I was stuck and had nowhere and no one to run to at this point, deep down I knew I was worthless, and to be honest I was right. Fabian took me there nearly every weekend to let Ruiz masturbate in a corner to the visage of my naked body, and sometimes paint me. I was so used to being used that it didn't even feel wrong anymore, it felt like what I deserved to be honest, for my years of using people. For all of the people that I had failed as well. The artist eventually became enamored with me, despite my constant threats I would murder him if he crossed the room and tried to touch me, at times offering me homes in Italy, vacations abroad, keys to cars, he would give me solid gold bars, literal pieces of gold, or jewelry and lavish paintings he had painted, anything to pay for his crimes. I detested him and my life but was glad to have some sort of existence especially in the shadow of someone so important. I was merely surviving at this point, everyone that lived at the compound was retired military, living on huge disability checks for becoming insane from their military experiences. I was the only one not

contributing so I was the sacrificial prostitute. The flesh that could be rendered and offered up. This was a pretty dark time for me, I felt so far away from the person I once was, I felt like I didn't know myself at all anymore. Like most times in my life, I turned to drinking and smoking pot to escape, that and lots of music while I painted. I was painting a lot then, painting surreal paintings, abstract designs, and sometimes architectural paintings of the city during the holidays. I was on autopilot, but really glad that I had a few outlets to get my thoughts out. Out of the blue Fabian decided that all of the house's male inhabitants should take a road trip somewhere a good distance away to rough it out even more and clear our minds. I told them about New Mexico and how nice it was at certain times during the year. So the house as a group decided to go there and do some camping at different random campgrounds along the way. We hit the road looking like a gang of ragtag mercenaries, hardly agreeing on anything such as who sat where in the dodge caravan, where would we camp out along the way, who was what rank in our pecking order, and so on. Even with the multiple accounts of bullshit it was nice to be out of San Antonio making our way towards New Mexico. It was even more nice to be far away from Ruiz and his perplexing sexual advances, I had always believed that if I put in the work and painted my best that he would have given me the opportunity to become a big artist, maybe ride his coattails, but instead I was simply used to the point that I had no identity, and I felt like I deserved it, for all of the people I had used and hurt along the way in my life to get to that point. Like it was my karma manifesting in this life instead of the next one. It was my time to feel what they had felt. Whether I had done it intentionally or not. I deserved to be made childlike once more, to feel worthless and vulnerable, until now, now that we escaped the mold and dust of San Antonio, we were free as birds coasting along feeling the child-like thrill of being on the road. We stopped as planned at several spots for camping and RVs as we progressed down the highway, until we got to Big Bend and camped for several days, erecting our tents and hooking up a small tv to the cars auxiliary at each spot. You could sense the border getting nearer, as Texas began to change in shape. The dry New Mexican air was a familiar welcome.



I had talked these guys into coming here for this road trip, pushing us the farthest we dare venture as a commune, instead of simply stopping at the border of Texas to visit Big Bend national park like an average tourist. Mainly because I missed my old pal, and I wanted to see Tomathy, and my lost love who I will not mention her name, as she has passed, once more, no matter what it took, I would see my old familiar friends. We got to the campground on the outside of Hobb's and set up our little wandering circus right there in the concrete picnic table area of our campsite. We ran power from the van we had come in, and draped tarps all around the enclosure to make it into a nomadic tent home like something you would see in a bedouin camp. We had brought several screens for watching movies on the road, we had brought an Xbox and games, and we had a hard drive with three hundred movies on it, all of which we had been using to personalize our camping experience along the trip. We grilled right there on the built-in grills and drank gallons of vodka at each location, then on to the next. We would often hit up local bars and strip joints in the towns we happened to be near as well, so in all it had become quite the excursion. I had acquired Tomathy's number online before we had left, so I called Tomathy on a burner phone to let him know that I was finally in town, and that perhaps one of the evenings that our group was still in Hobbs that he could pick me up and we could have a catch up smoke session. My old friend Tomathy was very eager to see me, it seemed we had each aged so much in the short time since we had last seen one another, and he wanted badly to see an old friend who wasn't a heroin addict or someone who he had grown tired of there, of course talk poetry and life lessons that had been forced upon us. I tried to get in touch with at least one of my high school muses from Hobbs High, and was able to reach the one that mattered the most. I let her know I would definitely be trying to see her, that I desperately wanted to see her. I would only be there a week so I was going to make sure I saw at least a few familiar faces. After the great expanse of Texas that we had traversed I simply had to have a good moment with someone so cherished as a friend from those youthful days. Childhood seemed so long ago, I now felt like I was an old man in a twenty seven year old's body. At long last I had a moment

to sneak away one evening, after getting my muse's information. I learned it was going to be a long walk, a very long walk actually is what it turned out to be. I left in the late afternoon early evening, and walked for four hours to get to her house. The funny thing was that in a car it was a thirty minute drive, but on foot slowly walking it stretched out more into the three hour range. The walk was literally a straight walk for ten miles, then a right turn, a ten mile walk, then another right turn, and a straight six mile walk. Pretty much a giant square shape. From space it would have been a weird square shape, for me it was a long dry walk. It surely was a very, very long walk. I finally arrived at her home around Nine in the evening. I was lucky she was even there, it was sort of unannounced, I just knew her family home was there still I had seen it on the drive in, and from speaking to her before leaving Texas I knew she still lived in her old house that she had inherited. It was worth the walk though, my feet were killing me but it was great seeing someone from my past, maturing and living life to the fullest. We laughed and had a few drinks, smoked some red opium, and watched "Pineapple Express." We were talking about how much everyone had changed since school. I knew she was drunk when she asked me if I wanted to kiss her, something I had dreamt of since high school, something I had always wanted to do. I couldn't go through with it though, after all of this time, mostly I didn't think it was right to make out with her when she was drunk. It didn't feel like something an honest guy would do. She fell asleep watching the movie next to me, and I have extreme Ocd when I'm intoxicated, and the opium wasn't making it any better. So I cleaned her house for her. It was really messy from her children, I even killed a huge camel spider on her wall, which I actually didn't know even existed until then. Fuckers were hard to kill too, like a miniature army tank with fangs. I will never forget the crunch sound of my weight on that ugly little demon from the middle east that somehow made its way to New Mexico. I then turned off all of the lights so my ex muse could sleep, then after a small kiss on her forehead, let myself out. It was fairly late, around midnight, so I knew it was going to be a long, slow trudge back. I was way too restless though to just watch her sleep, so I took the rest of the red opium and made a little pipe out of a socket I found

in her yard, then began the long walk back to the campground. I smoked most of the opium before I even made it to the first left, and I was already walking a lot of the grind with my eyes closed, like sleep walking. Most of that damn walk was the wind whistling through the wilderness out there like some desert wil-o-wisp. That and the sound of my feet scraping the dusty dry shoulder of the road that led me back to the camp. It was around two in the morning and I was peaking on opium, watching the moon slowly crawl across the sky, like a white marble rolling across a black silk table searching for a black hole to vanish in, I was intently watching the moon, my mp3 player giving me strength with my favorite music, all while willing my legs to walk step by step, when my mp3 player suddenly died, and with that sudden decrescendo I began to hear the dirge of countless coyotes in the distance going apeshit on someone's escaped dog. These coyotes were getting louder and louder like they were a stone throw away from the road in the brush. I was sure someone lost a pet that night, I could hear the coyotes laughing and snarling with glee as the yelping went silent, as my mp3 player betrayed me but allowed me insight into the creatures of the night. I crouched as I walked, lest they hear or smell me and come after me there on a stretch of nothing alone in the night. They sounded distant after ten minutes of stealthy walking, but not distant enough to feel safe. Suddenly it was as silent as a crypt, they must have been gorging on flesh far from me by now. I picked up the pace. Around four in the morning I finally began to get close to the campground. I was so sore, my feet were basically dragging at this point, and I had fought the urge to just lay down and sleep on the side of the road several times by then. I made it though, hungry, tired, hungover and thirsty. I made it. I stumbled into camp, ignoring the inquiries about how it went and why had I been gone so long, and passed out in my sleeping bag. I woke up in the afternoon to the boys grilling and laughing, playing cards, and had some food to charge up my body, I didn't tell them about the events of the night, nor did I tell them I had walked nearly eight hours the day before for, well nothing more than to see someone I had once loved very much. That evening though I had a pleasant surprise when Tomathy showed up at the campground and gave me the hop in wave like he used to in high school when he

would pick me up to go on our misadventures... it felt like our normal routine, like it hadn't even been years since we had last seen each other, " You're coming over for dinner brother, and tonight we're going to get high as hell and drunk and we're going to talk about all the crazy stuff we did!" Tomathy exclaimed as I got in and buckled up. "I see you traded the little red car for a huge red pick up truck," was all that I could come up with as rebuttal, he relayed to me a brief summary of his life post high school, how he had several children and how he left their mother, how he worked in the oil field, but got fired, how he still loves to cruise and listen to music and smoke weed. That was exactly what we did, driving the alleys of Hobb's until we arrived at his home, where he introduced me to several young boys who were his sons, and a baby girl, his newly arrived daughter. It was nice to see my old friend with a family and purpose. We ate a good meal and laughed about his large pet parrot who whistled songs but was prone to land on the table and punk you for food, then we disassembled and went to the back yard to smoke some more and talk over a few beers. "Do you remember summoning that demon?" Tomathy asked me, I just knew he was going to venture there! only not so soon, I just knew it, so we regaled that night around the fire while we were on acid. My face said it all, then my mouth followed, "Man, I wondered if anyone else saw that shit, but I never had the guts to bring it up after we woke up the next day all sore and groggy from sleeping in the desert. I remember it's ever changing face telling me we were all cursed to die young." I said, as we stared into the fire pit he had lit to keep us warm as we sat in that cold New Mexico night air and smoked a joint. "I remember that as well... I remember when we chased that storm in my car for over thirty miles out in the flatlands...watching lightning tear through the sky as far as the eyes could see. I remember we thought we had lost the storm at one point, and then suddenly it was all around us... lightning was striking alongside the car as far as I could see, it was bright like Hiroshima in there as we sat in fear and wonder. The two of us writing away in our little notebooks of poetry, of all the things to do in the middle of a storm's wrath." Tomathy went on. "That was such a great night, such a powerful feeling, being in the grip of a storm, helpless, but happy to be alive in the fury of life."

I nodded, killed my beer and smiled. It was great to be around my poetic friend again. We shared a few poems we had written as men, a few musings and regrets. The night waned on and it became the late night around one in the morning, so Tomathy took me back to the park, back to my new reality. I gave my brother a hug and then left to go back to the chaos that was Fabian and our fight club. It was the last time I would ever see him again, within a few years he would die from a heroin overdose, shortly after Bill, the third accomplice in our trio, would die from a brain tumor. Dust in the wind, as the saying goes, they now belonged to the ages. I am so glad I was able to see him on that random trip with the savage troupe. So, back to the craziness that comes with living with drunkards that love to brawl, love to kick and bite while drunken eyes roll back into their skulls. The whole experience really turned me off to drinking, watching people become totally different people under the influence. The remainder of the time we spent in Hobbs was awkward, as Fabian was treating me like I was now an outcast, all because of my wanting to reconnect with my old friends, which seemed to infringe upon my new friendships. On the stretch of highway leading out of Hobbs I offered the suggestion that we stop by the U.F.O. museum there in Roswell then possibly detour to Carlsbad caverns to visit the cave, we had stopped by a few caves in Texas on the trip over, so it felt organic to see one in a different state, i had been as a kid and now it was a good spot to visit. To be honest, I felt like things were smoothing out like we were in our groove as before, until we started leaving the cave. I noticed that Fabian was distant, and wouldn't even look at Chris or I. Needless to say, shortly after leaving the cave, as we approached the border of New Mexico, Fabian stranded Chris and I right there on the side of the road. With little more than what we had on, and what we had to carry. I remember sitting on the side of the road as the group sped away from us in the van. I sat there in the dirt wondering what exactly the future would bring, out in the middle of nowhere, far far away from comfort and civilization. "Shit," I said out loud, "It is about to be night... All I ever wanted to do was make art, not stay lost forever."

### **Chapter 7. Weeping & Wandering In What Was Once An Octopus's Garden**

Chris and I sat there for a while still, watching the sun retreat over the vast New Mexico horizon... my mind was racing, I pondered whether we should make a camp... whether we should start a fire... whether we should

start blindly walking into the pale light as the darkness chased behind us. “Whelp,” Chris finally said, “let's get a start on hitchhiking.” I kept thinking, who in the hell is going to pick up two strange men in the middle of nowhere. Two guys in their late twenties who were just out on foot just strolling through the wilderness. No one, that's who. So needless to say, we walked nearly all night, rarely seeing any cars at all, just sticking out our thumbs when we did. Imagine if you can, walking blindly into the night with your thumb sticking out. I imagined camel spiders the size of horses galloping around us in the night just beyond visibility, or coyotes circling us like sharks. I imagined like weird misshapen demons clawing the dirt right outside of the street light glow alongside short stubby men sneering and holding large knives waiting to chop us up as they spoke foreign languages while laughing their asses off at our suffering.

Now, I would also like for you to try and imagine what it would feel like being stranded on a highway, nowhere to go or hide or rest, trudging all night and day during a time that is so hot you can literally see the water evaporating from the Earth. Imagine that kind of journey mingled with betrayal, and ending with a vast expanse of a desert before you, the approaching purple crescendo that is a desert night closing in behind you as you take step by heavy step. To think all of this began outside of Carlsbad Caverns, a cave in a towering mountain straight from Mordor, only instead of being in your imagination as you read “The Hobbit,” safe in bed it is now your reality. I had a guide at least, in the form of this quiet friend of mine who happened to look exactly like Kurt Cobain. My friend Chris was a true wanderer at heart and did not mind the open road, it beckoned to him, I could see he loved the thrill of survivalism, that the freedom of nature called to him so we began traveling through the very depths of two great oceans of sand and fire, known as the American West, with only a sleeping bag, a small tent, four bottles of water, some peanut butter crackers, beef jerky, a little cash, a disposable camera, and whatever else we could stuff into a backpack, we decided to set out towards El Paso from Carlsbad to reach the main highway that led directly to California. Our plan was to walk as much as we could in the evenings and mornings and sleep during the hottest parts of the day, and get rides

when we could. We were up for the adventure as a team, ready to brave the world, until we eventually had navigated the deserts, wandered over the mountains, and trekked through the forests to find a tropical sanctuary, and also find ourselves. That is what we believed at first, until eventually that cliché notion was replaced by the very real need to survive. Truth be told, I never once in my life had tasted the uttermost fruits of freedom as I did while wandering the highways that make up the West coast. Despite our many setbacks and uphill battles, it was more empowering than any eye opening experience in my life. I was dirty, cold, often afraid, often exposed to the Earth and its many forms of life. Mingling with concepts and intelligence through a symbiosis that exists with man as he is raw, in his true element, one in the flow of nature's ebbing tides. I can say with great joy, in those moments I felt true purpose. Away from technology, away from mankind. Just a man wandering the Earth, in touch with the elements that exist in us all, bare before the stars that crown existence, in the evenings and nights out in the desert, exposed in the rain as it drenched and poured, cooled by the wind at night as it circled the globe leading back to us, repeating its constant retreat like the Earth was breathing. I was in the presence of God in those moments, when I was more animal than ever. I cannot explain how much terror resides in the mind when it is unhinged and left to ridicule the wanderer. For there is much to fear in the world of man, whether you are a helpless child or a lost adult. In those moments I found Christ was with me. I wanted to explore the universe and leave my body as I used to in my dreams, escape into the galaxy that was often before me in the absence of light and civilization. I thought that this would be the central most important moment of my life, a real life eye opening affirmation, even taking precedence to the birth of my children, and honestly it was. For at the heart of life, we are but spiritual animals, and survival in the wilderness with nothing, is the core foundation of the universe's mightiest creations. I set out with timid curiosity, and began the arduous task that is the monotonous drudgery that is covering highway miles by way of foot, then I became seasoned and hardened by the lack of materialism that comes with needing only food and water to be satisfied. Most of my gaze at first was the back of Chris's



heels, and the ever changing ground beneath them. Totally disregarding the endless scene to my left or right, all I could concentrate on was my betrayal at hand. "I'm gonna kill Fabian, if I ever see his bitch ass again." I swore out loud to the back of Chris's head, and to the clouds above. "I'm gonna fucking kill him with a dull, heavy piece of wood." I chuckled as I said wood and heard Chris chuckle as well as he kept the pace up. "It isn't too bad though once the clouds cover the sun. Even if it's only for a little bit." I let out a sigh, then began to save my voice, I knew Chris would tell me the same, to save my breath, that we needed to cover a good distance before dusk, to make it to a good spot to hitchhike from, either that or end up walking until morning, just to get to a decent spot to refill our water and rest at, before continuing down the highway, ever down the ever expanding highway. Six hours into our walk to El Paso, a man and his pregnant wife picked us up just as we drank our last bit of water. I sat in the young fellows' back seat alongside Chris. I looked out at the cloud formations and their shadows dancing on the open plain below them, resembling massive schools of fish flying through the open air like shapeless magic carpets, or giant plastic bags aloft in the breeze. I knew we were going to be ok, having this kind of good fortune at the beginning of our endeavor, it was pure luck only having to walk so many miles the first day of our longest stroll. There is nothing like the sun in your eyes while you're treading on unfamiliar ground, feeling hopeless. However carefree in a car with your feet off the ground, safe inside of a man made vehicle back in the presence of civilization with idle time to daydream, now that is luxury, that kind of moment makes you feel safe, reminiscing on creature comforts nearly forgotten. With the sun in your eyes, you have to close them and think, you have to doze off... Traveling in this manner is reflective of a doomsday nomad's sojourn into the normality of irregular behavior, snagging rides, stealing moments of joy, being glad to have water offered by a stranger. Makes me think of days to come, maybe when the world ends, wandering on foot like nomads, seeking refuge and refuse. Who would have thought only a day before we were a part of a group of travelers investigating the greater parks together, until an offense was given. I never would have thought I would now be on foot, heading out into the world

Well not entirely alone, but definitely not a member of a group any longer. However, I knew someday this would all come in handy, this kind of experience, like training to survive, whether it was for a brief moment in the near future, or to build a skill set to be used in another lifetime, I would make sure this would matter, and that I would matter. Or the Carbon that consists of my being, fused inside of me would never have mattered in the scheme of things, and I really would have been better off had I never been born. My feet were already hurting in my boots, and it had only been the first few days of adventuring. “Gonna have to toughen up,” I whispered to myself. “Huh,” Chris mumbled, I must have woken him talking to myself, probably said a few things out loud and hadn't noticed. I shrugged it off and whispered to Chris “I think we are getting Closer to El Paso, I think he is gonna drop us off soon.” I thought this because the white glow of what had to be El Paso Texas began to loom right on the edge of the darkened horizon. I caught a little more shit eye, I knew that later on we would be back on foot, soon we would be back on the outside of a creation that we humans fabricated to shield us as we went from destination to destination as civilized beings. Chris and I however would be reduced to basic animals once more wandering. No gps, no maps, no four walls and beds.No idea. Upon reaching the city, we exited the car and thanked the fellow and his girlfriend, who never gave us their names, and set out on foot on the edge of El Paso, having crossed that highway void that separated us from those city lights sooner than we had thought, Chris and I had refreshed energy. Now to navigate the city at night, and find a spot to hide while we rest. a spot to hide and sleep right next to the most dangerous city in the world at the time. Something we actually did not in any way know. We walked for several hours down the streets of El Paso in the dark, under bridges, and through alleys, all under the light of street lamps and passing cars. We climbed over fences and snuck through people’s yards, climbed walls and squatted through drain tunnels, Until we finally found ourselves near the highway that leads straight to California. All of this silent treading, this non stop hoofing made me exhausted, I was ready to sleep on anything, anywhere. When suddenly a border patrol agent pulls up behind us flashing his lights while loudly exclaiming on his intercom,

“STOP WHAT YOU ARE DOING AND DROP YOUR BACKPACKS!” We complied immediately, and sat down with our heads down and our hands behind our heads, the agent approached us and with a thick southern accent declared “Where are you fellas heading tonight?” Two other border patrol agents approached us anxiously from the side. “We are hitchhikers,” Chris belted out, “making our way to California.” The taller agent looked baffled at us, his partner began looking through our backpacks as he laughed at us. “Do you boys not realize you're a stone throw away from Juarez Mexico, the most dangerous city in the world? You're by the edge of a mountain near the Mexican border, where people disappear daily.” As the border agent said this to Chris and I, helicopters flew overhead and began shining lights at the top of the mountain, and machine gun fire rang out, filling the once quiet evening with the ear shattering cadence of high powered rifles. The agents gave us our things back and our licenses, and said “Tread lightly here, and move on fast, or you may disappear too.” Chris and I headed back to the highway area, and walked further away from the city, to a place where the bushes covered a drainage ditch on the side of the road. It was low, broad, flat and even better, hidden. Ideal spot for sleeping on the open road. Chris and I fell asleep humming songs to muffle the sounds of machine guns in the distance as cartel members in Mexico no doubtably did monstrous things to each other all night long as the rest of the western slept. Despite all of that going on around us, Chris and I slept like babies after our day's endeavors. Nestling with the wind in our sleeping bags beneath a clear starry night, as the earth slowly meandered through space. I began dreaming of wolves chasing me through some candy coated nightmare of jagged forests and giant faces of rotten lovers moaning from the sky. I'll never forget it, it was as though my empathy was drawing from the murders in Mexico, being that close to such a dangerous place. Eventually I was forced awake again from my nightmares by the sound of even more border patrol agents, of course, checking to see if we were merely two dead bodies discarded on the side of the highway, or illegals. “Possibly headless,” I heard over the radio chatter as they approached our prone shapes in the early morning dew. Headless bodies on the road, an ever occurring offense near El Paso Texas. Upon proving to the

authorities that we were not dead or worse, illegal immigrants, we decided to sleep a little longer, then walk some more miles down the highway. Now that California was on the horizon, we had a direction to wander. Now the journey may actually begin. Plenty of time to dwell on the past few years once more. Recap the stupidity that comes with hiding behind substance abuse when hurt by life. By midday we had covered nearly twenty miles by walking on the shoulder of the highway, snacking on crackers and looking for interesting rocks or coins. Most of our conversations involved talking about how we would make the best doomsday compound if we had unlimited resources, who we would fight if we could fight anyone, and what sort of mutants we would be if X-men were real. We would discuss survival tips as well, the best roads to navigate to remain off the grid, the best foods for surviving, and how to make a camp fast and efficiently under threat of weather. We talked about our dream girls that we wish we could marry, and at one time even discussed what we would do if we ever had our dicks shot off in a war. At times I found myself wondering how I had arrived at this point in my life, was my story writing itself or was I sabotaging my true purpose by trying to live on a divergence from my true path, were my expectations of what my life was supposed to be unrealistic? I was feeling the effects of detoxing at this point, luckily I was able to sweat out most of the hard drugs that I was taking on that first day of walking non stop, doggedly marching on a broken path that led us straight into hell. It wasn't even summer yet and it was killer hot out there during the day and freezing at night, but I was glad to be ridding myself of the poisons that I had been subscribing to for the majority of my recent past. So many pills, mixed with hard liquor and street drugs bought from strange street pharmacists. I was numb to the world now as a result of Leah's touch upon my mind and her goodbye, as tragedy befell us with each step. All I had endured led me into the wilderness to forget her and how I had failed her. How many times must a man fail a woman, before he realizes that he is truly failing himself? Too many times I fear. So how am I to find redemption before the black holes in our galaxy swallow us? Far too many miles ahead for thoughts like this at the beginning, but still. I had to do this, for myself, and to remove this infernal love sickness from my

mind. I had to do this to feel like a man again. I was so glad to have Chris with me though, I could have stumbled along by myself for a while until I was overcome by the elements and my own mind, but he truly knew how to overcome all things that were difficult. He taught me how to carry on after being mortally wounded, but it wouldn't be until later in life when I would discover that after battling dragons, that is exactly a lesson you will need to have learned, before grappling with the beasts that enslave your mind. That, and how to overcome after your downfall, how to rise up after being mortally wounded, and ride onward. I didn't realize that I now had many great dragons awakening which I would be battling in my future, and many lessons to learn while lamenting over their ruin. Now the problem with walking great distances, is that you have to keep convincing your mind that you're nearly there, wherever your destination may be, even if it is far from being nearby, you have to continually tell yourself that it is or you will go mad with the little details in every thought that comes with every single step. That becomes a great many thoughts over time, especially when you and your traveling companion are not speaking much to conserve energy. So much of the walking is the affirmation that you are nearly there, wherever there is, it could be there, right there, ten more steps, or ten thousand more miles far from here in a monastery hidden inside of a forest that no eye has ever seen. You'll never know until you embrace the fear. And you'll never make it unless you have a strong, well disciplined mind. At this particular time in my life, and most other times in my life to be honest... I was not well disciplined. In truth, my mind has never stopped wandering my entire life, and I never shut up. I also talk too much when I am excited. I was always exceptional at reading, because it allows the mind to wander, other than that, I absolutely detested paying attention to anything outside of the imagination, that or to cartoons. I swear if I could have had any job it would have been to draw and voice cartoons, or design clothes. I love those art forms so much. As it is though, my mind wandered a whole lot, and was wandering even more while walking for endless miles. I thought of the people that I had let down up to that point in time. Saw them lined up as far as the eyes can see, slowly walking by me two at a time and smiling knowingly. Then I decided to

not think about that too much. It is better to contain those thoughts when they get out of hand children.

Untamed thoughts can consume you at any moment. That and addictions, addictions to anything.

Addictions and bad choices can lead you down a path that keeps perpetuating insanity, leading you to doing many things on your own. In fact, as a result of hard drugs, I did everything on my own during several periods in my life. The company I had just left however thrived in that environment, within the realm of chaos and blatant disrespect for society. Therefore I suppose I too thrived in that madness for a small time, where fighting and rituals of the flesh were seen as normal, and the path that leads to being made whole again, basking in one's own light. I have done many stupid things that have led to me being homeless on so many occasions, and it really altered my perception. Even before falling in with Fabian and being at the mercy of the slum lord, I was at the mercy of the world, nearly destitute until I met my three hundred pound pal wolfie who flipped burgers with me at McDonalds. McDonalds salt is so recurring in my life, from my first birthdays eating fries, until then with Wolfie, the smell of salt in the air at McDonald's. Haunting and alluring to me with so much nostalgia. It was funny to me how we both quit on the same day and I moved in with him at his roach infested crack house of an apartment by downtown. The roaches would run all over your face and body throughout the night if you lay exposed, so you had to sleep like a mummy. Those thoughts still creep in like roaches do, when I'm not expecting it I am back on the couch covered in roaches at Wolfies, I hated it, especially with my o.c.d. I would boil the stuff I was going to use to make food before I would even make the food just to sanitize it but hey, it beat the streets. Beat a situation like this, walking forever and ever. Chris and I walked on through the desert of New Mexico, now at a different latitude and longitude than when we had been abandoned. We made it through that particularly flat state with ease, walking some and getting a few rides, I took photos with the disposable camera anytime something noteworthy happened, I also took photos of all of the signs that I made to hitchhike with. I knew that no one that I knew would ever believe I did this if we happened to make it through this type of journey. So a little evidence was better than none in my opinion.

Especially if most of the trip was going to be us walking, and sleeping beneath the stars, living like the poorest of the poor and eating from trash cans when we had no money, more free than any person I had ever been. When Chris and I reached Phoenix after many rides and miles walked, we had been sitting on the entrance to a bridge thumbing rides and begging for change when a nice older woman picked us up and asked us if we needed anything, we tried to shrug her off but she was very persistent with her notion that we needed rescuing. So much so that she actually ended up taking us home with her, two strange twenty year old guys in the middle of nowhere in Arizona, and let us use her washing machine and shower, then she fed us and let us watch some tv. I think she must have really needed to feel like she saved us, even just for one night, she begged Chris and I to stay the night, "We do not mind this life of being on the road," we explained to her, as she dropped us off near the main highway leading out of Arizona to California. As we departed the attractive older blonde gave us each forty dollars to get whatever may help us along the way. I truly think that the woman was an angel, but if not, whoever she was, she was a genuinely beautiful and giving soul. With full stomachs and renewed clean bodies after so many miles on foot and in the back of trucks, sleeping alongside other wanderers who had been picked up with dogs or traveling companions, we had persevered, and made it mile after mile down that old dusty road. Meeting her as we sat on the side of the road was like meeting an angel in the middle of the desert, that really is the only way to describe it. A tall blonde angel with a heart of gold. We now faced more of the fiery desert though, back at it on foot. Naturally I was always resistant to being back at it, especially after getting rides, or being inside of a nice home and showering for the first time in a long time. It was the insecurity that comes with the fear of never being a part of that life again that stung the most. Never being inside, always outside. Made me think of when my father would kick me out for missing my curfew, made me think of the rebellion in my heart that made me go through those situations. Why did it exist? the need to go against what is normal, and not conform. Why was it so strong in me? Well Chris and I walked for what seemed like countless miles after that, we walked the entire day until we became

insane with hunger while sweating our nice perfumed shower smell off in the dead air, roasting in that still heat. I was delirious, I even got to the point where I was trying to be comical with the signs I was making to maybe get people to stop and pick us up. One even said “we won’t kill you! we promise,” another said “Will make with the mouth,” another said, “PLEASE PICK US UP WE ARE DYING.” One thing I learned from that experience is that many people will look you in the eye, and go on by leaving you to die. Human beings can be extremely self centered, especially in the middle of nowhere, with no one around to witness, they will not bat an eye to help another member of their species. I was about to give in and say my last prayers as evening approached and we were still wandering down the shoulder on foot, watching the sun bake the moisture right out of the Earth. I was so hungry, and thirsty, so tired from walking. All that I could think about was curling up in a ball and sleeping until a brand new Mercedes stopped beside us and rolled down the window. Chris and I were then face to face with a short fat gentleman, who with a heavy Spanish accent asked us if we needed a ride. Of course we said yes, it turned out he was straight out of Cuba, and had been driving this rented car from Florida straight to Los Angeles, and had begun to grow weary of driving so many miles non stop, when he spotted us. He glared at us and said “I’ll give you boys a ride if you can drive me the rest of the way into L.A. so I can get some rest.” People out here were either very trusting, or trusted no one it seemed. He then jumped in the back seat, as I got in to drive and Chris took shotgun, he went on with “Oh, and if you guys are hungry, here are some sandwich bags of fresh watermelon, cherries, oranges, and a few sandwiches also.” We set out to finish crossing the state of Arizona in a new luxury car with fresh fruit at hand, moments after walking and starving. We were once again blessed in the wilderness. With a belly full of fresh fruit, Not only did we get a ride, but we were the ones driving. Chris and I took turns driving that stretch into the Hollywood hills, allowing the man to rest to his content, listening nonstop to a c.d. of Cuban artists covering Beatles songs. It was surreal. I took a picture of the Mountains with the disposable camera as we began the descent into California. It always amazes me how it literally goes from desert, to lush tropical



mountains full of the largest flowers and vegetation you will ever see. Roses the size of your head, huge palm trees, and civilization as far as the eye can see. All in the blink of an eye, desert then life. Lights, upon lights upon lights, and in the night, it looked like a black ocean filled with fireflies. I drove the luxury car to a nice park I had noticed, thanked the kind man for his hospitality, his kindness and generosity, and then set off on foot again towards the mountains there outside of San Bernardino California. Of course it was snowing there in the mountains, but there in the outskirts of the city it was only raining on us as we exited the Mercedes and prepared to seek shelter from the night. I knew it would be a long time before we had a lucky break like the old Cuban guy again, but we had done it, we had conquered the deserts, and made it to the lavishness of California, where everyone is always rushing to and fro trying to be a star. It felt odd being in California without Leah, even more so having lived in Hollywood before now, right across from Warner Bros studios in decadence, and now as a vagabond, now I was just a hobo with a dream. That damnable first night there it rained on us all night, and the bridge we slept under basically flooded, so we moved on up the street, all of our sleeping bags and clothes were soaked and it was cold mountain air, so we scavenged around and broke into a mechanic's yard, where we found an unlocked car that we could sleep inside of to escape the elements. It was still cold enough to feel painful, but way better than being outside exposed to the rain and cold. I slept curled up in the back seat and Chris slept sitting upright in the front seat. Some family is gonna get this car back and never know two random guys slept in it, I thought, as I tried to sleep. I kept thinking about how some people do this every single day with absolutely no alternatives, and now I am one of them. I dozed off with frozen feet and wet clothes on, and woke in the morning to the sounds of a mechanic getting ready for the day by opening his gates up. Chris and I snuck out of the car and began making our way to the highway to hitch hike some more, we got a few miles down the road when I snapped, I was not able to will myself on any longer, also I was starting to not feel well, in a way that I cannot describe, I began to have the most urgent notion in my mind that I needed to go back to Texas, after being on the road nearly two weeks and going through so

many different situations, I parted ways with Chris, never to see him again, borrowed some change from strangers for a public transit ride and made my way around the mountain to the nearest local bus stop where I begged for enough change to make it farther up to the greyhound station, where I borrowed someone's phone since mine did not have coverage there, and called my grandparent's. I told them what was happening and where I was. I told them it seemed dire and that I needed to straighten out my life so they wired some money to me to buy a bus ticket home and to get some food along the way. I immediately got in line and bought a one way ticket back to San Antonio where they could pick me up, I also used a pay phone to inform one of my girlfriends that I had met online after Leah, that I was on the way home, and that I would be needing a room for at least a week if she could book it and help me out. I felt the universe aligning to carry me home with ease, especially after the tumultuous journey I had endured. So funny, how it took a little more than a day to traverse back across that which had just taken Chris and I weeks to journey across, costing us blood and sweat and tears, quite literally. Upon arriving back in San Antonio after nearly a two day bus ride, most of which I slept while awkwardly taking up two seats. Upon my arrival back in my city I was greeted by a tiny Chinese girl I had met online several months ago and had proceeded to have sex with in a mall parking lot. Jackie was a sex addict like me and she was also a spoiled little rich girl, who liked to seem like she was slumming, she was really into short skirts and Porcupine Tree. Jackie had gotten a room in her name for me at a nearby La quinta Inn and filled the sucker up with food, fresh clothing and new shoes for me, so it seemed like I was back at the crest of life and in a pretty good situation again, a nice clean room, fresh sheets, a hot shower, food, and a nude twenty year old Asian girl. Complete opposite from just a few days before. That seemed to be a regular cycle for my life, extreme highs and extreme lows, like a weird lopsided wheel. I stayed with Jackie there in our room just enjoying our time together that entire week until my grandparents finally arrived back in the states from a navy reunion cruise they had been attending, to pick me up and take me home to help me get my life sorted out. I was never really close to Jackie, I pretty much used her to get

over Leah, and we mostly just had lots of sex. Jackie had at one time wanted me to move to Galveston with her, but to be honest I was not very fair by being with her while I still had so much love for Leah. Still, she was a great catch and a wonderful giving person. It was difficult to tell her goodbye and she was pretty hurt over it, I didn't think it would work though with me living two hours away from her out in the country. I should have given her more thought, and tried at least, but love will make you lose sight of what is right in front of you, and sometimes by rushing into physical attraction, it deteriorates the more pure feelings faster with nothing to build off of. I was now, once more, on my way back to Sabinal, to live a low key life far away from the gangsters I had left there. It had been years since all of that jazz anyway, but still, in small towns people never forget, and often never forgive. I had been back in the sticks living in Sabinal for a few months and had acquired a job at the local Subway making sandwiches, when I decided to go back to college in nearby Uvalde Texas, having given it a go when I was just eighteen and having been denied financial aid as a result of being so young, It felt like the timing was right, something easy that involved learning. So I went and tested at the junior college in Uvalde, and after receiving incredibly high test scores was appointed several grants amounting to around thirty thousand dollars. I was on my way to being a college student at the same establishment where I had received my G.E.D. years before when I had moved in with my grandparents to get my life together the first time. You know, after being dismissed from high school for poetry. Life is so odd at times, the way it truly goes around and comes around. Unfortunately as a part of the grants stipulations I was also going to be living in the college dorms as a twenty eight year old, which meant I would be one of the oldest students in attendance. I started school well enough, and was getting a lot accomplished with my writing, especially being an English major. I was also given the opportunity to venture as an editorialist who was paid to work for the school newspaper as well as run it by editing it and delving out assignments. I was also in the advanced creative writing classes so that I could expand my knowledge of my field which was English. I was making money on the side doing about ten papers a week on top of my own work, which is

illegal but I didn't care, it was an extra thirty bucks a paper, which is a steal in college. I used the cash from that to mostly buy weed or whiskey, maybe some pills. I had been going through my classes with ease, maintaining a good g.p.a. Then went on break after four months of courses for the winter break, during which I began to feel sick again, and not in the sense like oh I don't feel well today, but just began to always feel dread and a heaviness in my chest. I began to always feel weak and tired, always drained of energy. I thought I had some sort of infection, so I made my way to the local clinic to get checked out. I was sitting on the medical table, feeling the paper that covers the padding with my fingers, when a tall Nigerian doctor came rushing in and told me that the results from the blood work had returned, and that my counts were off which was a good indication that I was not well. That and upon listening to my heart and lungs there was a strong indication that I was indeed sick, but more so than I knew. The holes in my heart that I was born with now were killing me I vaguely heard the doctor say, that and "You need to go to a cardiologist immediately." He went on with his Nigerian accent, "you are going to need heart surgery soon, you have all of the symptoms of heart failure."

### **Chapter 8. The Magnetic Hole Of Apathy And The Metal Ladder**

I was struck dumb. I couldn't think of anything smart to say for once, as my life flashed before me I could not

believe that after having been through so much, I was facing my mortality in my late twenties. I was pretty lucky I had my grandparents though, they kicked right into life saving high gear, and immediately began taking me to see a cardiologist in San Antonio, who confirmed for me that I was in fact dying from heart failure after years of drug abuse and cigarettes. I was going to need open heart surgery very soon. I didn't know what to do, or how I would pay for any of this. I put all thoughts of school aside, and began looking into outlets to make sure I could pay something, this was life or death. I was losing lots of sleep, staying up late in my grandparent's large greenhouse out back, I felt secure painting in there, I would sit in there for hours and hours painting oil paintings while sitting amongst the potted flowers and insects that lived in their own little ecology. I was fond of that greenhouse, I actually could have passed away in those moments while painting in that greenhouse, and would have been totally satisfied. That, however, was not the plan the universe had in store for me, no matter how long I stayed out there stressing about my life ending while smoking and painting until the late night, breathing in the fumes of the oil paint and turpentine. Painting surreal visions and cacti, painting my nightmares as well as my dreams. I would sit in that greenhouse and pray for hours, I would sweat and cry and pray, sometimes it would get so hot in there it turned into a sweat lodge, and I would go into a trance as I cried and pleaded for my life. It was in those moments that I began astral projecting, the power returned to me like when I was a child in my sleep, only now I was not asleep, I was on the cusp of death and was traversing into another realm. I was so sure this was the end of my existence. I felt at peace though, and knew my heaven would be centuries of me in that greenhouse alone. I left the greenhouse one afternoon, and was standing in the open air, staring into the sky with my back to a large pomegranate tree. I began praying with my eyes closed, just standing there speaking to the sky. I began to feel an odd sensation, like I was not alone. I finished pouring my heart out to the sky, then I turned around and opened my eyes to a blurry image of the pomegranate tree there, as the focus returned I saw that I was now face to face with a huge

purple indigo snake, which is basically a nine foot long cannibal snake that looked like purple metal, and he was poking his head out of the tree branches and looking me directly in the eyes. My skin crawled and I felt ancient suddenly. Actually I felt like mother Eve at that moment, alone in the garden while nude and afraid, while vulnerable and weak there watching the creature size up the universe in your eyes, watching it sway in the breeze as the tree moved back and forth. Then with a flick of the tongue, the snake vanished back into the shadows of the huge pomegranate tree limbs. It was a primordial feeling, one of the most bizarre feelings of my entire life. I sat in my room that night after dinner and wondered, is the lord of death truly watching my every move? Why am I cursed to live in this life of misery and constant change? Is it because my stubborn frail body would not die no matter what life keeps throwing at it, from being premature and malformed, to the car wreck that killed a man, every step of the way since, leading to now, where my heart is failing me. Did the snake materialize like in Eden to entice me with dark rituals and false promises? I couldn't be sure, but I knew the answer would lay in prayer. So I started to pray again, I went outside right there in another one of their gardens. I prayed until the late night, then my grandmother came outside and informed me that after a long day she and my grandpa had discovered a way to fund the open heart surgery. In fact, the city of Uvalde was going to pay upwards of thirty five thousand dollars from an indigent account. Years later after the surgery, I learned it was fraud committed by the woman who signed off on the money, she actually had been allotted much more for me, and kept a large amount of the money. At the time though, it was far more than I had, and it was free money to pay towards saving my life. I now simply had to wait for the day to come. The Methodist heart hospital in San Antonio had made all of the preparations for my surgery, they had me meet a surgeon who had also donated over two hundred thousand of his own money to help me with the surgery that he would perform, it was actually experimental at the time so they made many deductions on it, I was up for it though, as scared as I was, I wanted to live. I was so afraid though, I actually hardly slept at all in the time leading up

to the surgery, I was afraid I would never wake up again since everything seemed like it was going my way. Then on August third, at five in the morning, it was finally time. My family had driven from Post to be there with me, all of my uncles and aunts came for support, as I sat in the bed hungry and scared I tried to laugh it off with them. Around six in the morning a nurse came in and told me that she was giving me something to help calm me down. She had me count backwards and as I reached the number seven... Darkness. Thick black inky darkness, which had no end or bottom to it. It seemed like timeless eternity, then with a jerk, I was wide awake and they were sawing my chest open, the doctor was immediately taken aback, and the same nurse from earlier rushed in and after another injection of what had to be more anesthesia, I was back in the depths of a black pool of cool water, hidden deep within a lightless cave. I was an embryo, floating in the ebbing waves, then with a lurch, I was tossed from the waves and my body was on the moon. I mean it, I was literally on the moon, and could feel this talcum powder substance sifting through my fingers. It was so cold, and windy there without no clothes on, just teetering on my toes with no sense of gravity. I could see the Earth, so far away, like a perfect jewel poised on black satin surrounded by diamonds. "What am I doing here?" I thought out loud... Then a voice like steam from a burst pipe spoke from behind me. "This is the furthest I can venture, from Arbol, from the rocks of Eden. This satellite of the Earth is the farthest I am allowed to venture into the heavens now after eons of roaming the cosmos, I am confined to this now with you, creatures... I was once the highest creation, until your kind. I come here often, to peer back into what I once soared through, the deep heavens. You are dead... Right now the men of earth with their science are fighting to bring you back. If they fail, then you will belong to me, and I will claim you. Your life was found to be filled with fault, so if they do not succeed in bringing life back into you, you will become one of mine, a little human soul, marked for hell." I turned to address the voice, and there before me was a giant black shapeless worm like void with old wings, the wings were covered in teeth and claws, and along the creature's

entire body there were pitch black eyes. It must have been a mile long. The voice it had sounded like a million tones rushing into one another, if this was once Lucifer, then it made sense why he was so hideous and his once beautiful voice was now many hideous voices conjoined, that went from a hissing sound to every tone of malice and noise. I was appalled and could say nothing, all I could do was sit back down and run my fingers through the ancient powdery sand that was the moon's surface. Sitting there and hoping like hell they would revive me, I wanted to hide under everything, or dive naked into the vastness of space, anything to leave this wretched place and this wretched thing that kept taunting me like a child, far behind. "Remember Andrew when you were in the desert with your friends? Remember trying to call me and my servants? you are one of mine, you will rot here with your friends forever as my children feed on you. Remember when your grandmother locked you in a closet with the ferrets and they bit your hands? Remember stealing from infants? Remember the mother spider and her young that clung to her back as they touched your foot, that is forever for you, in those spider eyes you will dwell." It seemed like five eternities passed as I sat there like a child waiting to be disciplined. I knew that trying to be good at the last moment wouldn't save me, I was always such a terrible person, but was sure my faith would save me in the end. Too little too late, and now it was time to pay. I wanted to fly into the universe so badly, fly like a space moth over to the rings of saturn. I was looking at the Earth, thinking of all of the opportunities I had squandered when suddenly my body began to enter into a tunnel of light, and I could hear familiar voices coming through a wall of static. Above the voices of my family and loved ones, I could hear the many voices of death calling out "I will come for you another time, in another place! You and your friends who used the black book to conjure me, you will all die young! But for now, little one, you're back in the flesh! You are back in the game!" With that last hiss, I was out of the tunnel of light, and back in my body. I came to like weapon X, there were so many tubes in my stomach, in my penis, tubes sticking out of my abdomen, down my throat, and in my arms. I was handcuffed to the bed,



and was writhing in sheets as I lay trying to breathe. Suddenly two young nurses appeared yelling “he’s out of the coma! Calm down sir! Please calm down and we will remove the tube from your throat!” She then began to slowly pull a thick black rubbery tube out of my mouth which seemed to be as long as my entire body, it felt like some alien probe was being removed, then I could breath on my own. I was still handcuffed to the bed and felt like I was a noodle, trying to fly off of the moon away from death must have taken its toll as my body lay here being shocked. I started coughing hard despite my split chest, the result was ugly black smokers mucus coming out, so the nurse told me to spit it into a suction tube they had quickly put on the corner of my mouth. “Sir we are going to remove the handcuffs now, they were only necessary because believe it or not you started to awaken during the early stages of surgery. You had to be secured to the bed. A nurse will then inform you what happened during the procedure after you have been evaluated and given some time to come around.” My family and son then came into the room, and my father immediately belted out “you died in there! they had problems bringing you back because the material used to patch your heart came loose and blocked your artery. They had to have a pediatric surgeon who works on infant hearts rush in, you are so lucky this dr. is usually in Africa doing emergency heart surgery for children who have nothing, and she just happened to be here, she just happened to be in the same hospital, and was able to get here in time to help you live again, now tell me you’re not blessed.” I was in absolute shock laying there like a half dead frog after dissection. The team of doctors came in they explained the complications, that an obstruction was hindering my resuscitation, they closed two holes in my heart, fixed the obstruction which was actually the heart patch that had come loose, they reattached it and carved out an enlarged chamber with lasers, they then put me into a coma to so that they could see if it would take or not. In other words, it was nothing short of a miracle day for me. I got off easy, with a warning. God was giving me another chance to make things right. I was in the hospital ICU coughing up black tar from cigarettes for days, slowly walking the halls with my rehab nurse,

eating the steamed food. I noticed that I was the youngest person in the intensive care ward at the Methodist hospital, twenty eight compared to the multiple eighty and ninety year olds. I was so glad to be alive there among all of those old turtles, so relieved it was over after all of the worrying, I was even glad to eat that flavorless steamed food, that sugar free jello, the chalky juice. I was grateful to look down and see a flap of skin super glued to my chest, and glad I could hear my heartbeat roaring in my ears. I was discharged after a week, and the first thing I did was have a cheeseburger from McDonalds. I later learned that my father's father had died under similar circumstances. He had major heart surgery, then during the first week out of the hospital ate a lot of cheeseburgers and had sex both of which, you are told not to do, so he died as a result of sex. I was out and running though, this one burger wouldn't kill me, and I would be doing my rehab like I was supposed to, monitoring my heart rates, and eating right. I was going on nightly walks around the block, and pretty much thanking God with every breath. The worst part was sweating out all of the anesthesia, waking up several times a night drenched like someone poured water on me. It was hard to sleep like that, changing the sheets multiple times a night because they are soaking wet from sweat. The nightmares that come with the sweat are even worse. That was when my sleep paralysis began. My soul was trying to astral project in those days only to be locked outside of a glass box looking in on my life. At last it came time to return to school, there is nothing at all to do in Sabinal so going back to college was long overdue. Once more I moved back into the college dorms, took up my position as head editor and photographer of the school's newspaper, while taking my classes and pretty much sticking to myself. This went on for a year, my body healing while I expanded my mind, with clockwork precision. I also got back into my old routine of doing other students' papers for them on top of my work load for extra money. I got so good at it, that I could even write the papers for them and make it seem like they wrote it by writing the way they would speak but with all of my information, just to make sure teachers wouldn't catch on to what I was doing. It was a small college after all

in a country town, so you had to think on your feet. It wasn't all easy, there were always some tough moments, one time I ate Ramen noodles for two whole weeks. One in the morning and one in the afternoon, and would steal hot pockets from the nearby Walmart and put them in my sleeves to make it in between when I was broke. I was glad to be alive though, and learning more than I ever had while learning with others around others who were trying to change their way of thinking. People that were shaping their minds, and coming together over projects working as one, people who were trying to advance above the basics. Things went on in this manner for several years as my g.p.a. Would rise and fall and I would have to go on probation then get serious and bring my grades up. I messed up though and lost my focus, I fell for a young woman I met at a party. She was so hot and smart, half Filipino, half Hispanic, I fell for the girl named Mercy. We got pretty close pretty fast, she even broke up with her boyfriend to see me. Then after several months he even started staying with me, living in my dorm room instead of hers. Of course all of her little pals would also come hang out in my room, funny thing, At one time, I was like a sympathetic German in W.W.2 hiding Jewish people in my walls, except instead of jews it was students that had been kicked out of the dorms hiding in my room and living there, instead of going home, there would be people in pairs in beds, people on the floor. I would even sneak food in for them by taking extra for lunch and dinner with me, or by buying stuff that could be stretched out from the local Walmart, which meant pizza because it can be cut many ways. I liked having a ton of people in my little room, it made me feel less alone. I have the unique ability to be both introverted as hell and extroverted. I can adore a crowd then immediately detest it and retreat into my shell. I can tune in to people without really knowing how I do it, I think it is my hardcore empathy switch activating, there were even several moments when I would read all of the minds in the room, and then tell everyone what they were thinking about. Sometimes the heathen in me would retreat and I would gather them all together and preach to them, trying to install some sense of the old values in these new age digital kids. Well try

anyway, some people do not want to entertain the ancient teachings, but no matter what situation I was in, be it surrounded by gangsters, or crazy brawlers, drug addicts, witches, regular joes, or college kids, I was always telling people about the king in the sky. The great I am, and his adventures on Earth, how we are soaked in his blood and redeemed. Many of them would tune out, but some would listen. Mercy and I kept seeing each other despite our age difference, having extreme fights followed by passion and lust. Our toxic hell led to some heaven though, and I ended up having a baby with Mercy, when she was eighteen and I was twenty nine. She carried her in the womb while living in the dorms with me, as we both tried to finish school. We even discussed the possibility of having an abortion, we would argue a lot, and physically fight, and hurt each other. I loved her so much, more than life itself, I was just very immature, and didn't know how to be a lover or a father, I had a lot of lust in my heart, dark perverse thoughts that come from a lifetime of sexual deviancy. I have always suffered under this affliction. I would pleasure myself often when alone and was alone often, so it became an addiction that ruined many things for me. Especially the way Mercy felt about me. We ended up having our daughter Aviva Evangeline Anastasia, she was a summer baby. I left school even though I had enough hours to graduate, I quit and got a job as a manager at the local store to get a place and a car for us. It was time to be a daddy again, time to take responsibility, and not fail, the way I had failed Isaiah. I was a night manager the entire first year of Aviva's life, So I slept all day and worked all night. It was very trying for us, I was still a sex addict, still smoking a lot of weed and drinking, I was hardly present and Mercy was doing most of the work on her own. I decided to leave my job and get a day job to help her more with being a parent. I would work all day at a pawn shop, from seven to seven. I was making a ton of money, had jewels and nice clothes, I finally had two cars, and life seemed perfect. I felt like I had finally made it, and was being rewarded for all of my hard work. I had the most beautiful woman I had ever met, a beautiful daughter who had all she needed, and some excess as well. Things eventually took a turn when I went home

early one day to bring Mercy some money she had asked for, and ended up finding a man she was seeing hiding in the room under the bed. It got pretty heated so I pulled a gun on him, and long story short, after making him cry, I ended up in jail for kicking a man out of my house with excessive force. I was barred from returning to my own home for 3 days, during which time, Mercy sold everything that we owned, and ran off with the other man. Which left me stuck on a friend's couch, with nothing more than a bag of clothes and a car. Back to being homeless, back to being stuck with nothing, while having nothing. I writhed in agony, on that couch, I was so angry being reduced to nothing, while the person I loved was being fucked by the town idiot, the detective literally told me that he was the town loser and that the case would likely be dropped by the attorney general. The detective went on to tell me that he is always calling the cops because some guy catches him in his house, like I did, and beats his ass. He was telling me all of this as they were letting me go, So apparently I was the laughing stock of the city. I decided my family was more important though and wanted to salvage it somehow, so I tried to go on a road trip with Mercy, tried to make it work, but only a week in and we were back home and calling it off. Mercy ended up with her parents in her old room, while I stayed with my friends a little longer, having no place to go, and no job. I was getting in a whole lot of trouble though and drinking a tad bit more than a heart surgery survivor should. Smoking like a runaway train, and doing cocaine again. I would work odd jobs like selling liquor or laying concrete to make a few bucks, but mostly lived with my friend in his dog shit and tick infested house, while hating life and everyone in mine. The loud bass of my roommate's excessive stereo and his love for hip hop was drowning out the contempt in my inner thoughts. Contempt that boiled inside, waiting to be released like acid into a tornado. I was starting to get a real bad reputation again in Uvalde, in fact My friend J and I and truck full of people were at the river one afternoon in the fall, smoking a blunt and drinking, when a nearby neighbor started to yell at us about smoking around him and his kids, well every member of our group started yelling at him and he was yelling

back, as we began to leave I said “see you around old man,” right after my pal made like he was cocking a shotgun and aiming it at him. We left fairly quickly after that as it was pretty obvious he was gonna call the cops, so we screeched off spurting rocks all over with my friend's big truck tires. A flock of fools speeding off in a single truck, off to smoke more on some desolate farmers backroad, and listen to bass driven music. The group had been at it for nearly an hour when someone called and to let us know the cops were looking for me of all people! They were looking for me because of the pretend shotgun movement aimed at the old man. Supposedly because I had pulled a gun on the dumbass that I found under my bed I was now seen as a terrorist around town being watched in case I snapped. Prior to that, I had also had a case put on me for pulling a gun on Mercy as well, a decision that had our daughter removed from us as she was placed under guardianship of my parents while the two of us had to be educated as parents, this pretty much forced the two of us to complete courses to get her back in our home, so we had stayed together a little longer for that. I regret many things from my youth, mostly all of that which drove Mercy further and further away from me. Well after all of that nonsense, the police definitely wanted to find me, it seemed like they were anyway, for pretending to shoot a guy. “WAIT!” I exclaimed, “I wasn’t even the one that did that!” it had dawned on me in my drunkenness. I decided that I needed to go talk to the cops and square this away so I ran the idea by J to which he replied. “Don’t do it man, I’ll go drop you off somewhere safe, and you can hide. I’ll hide with you because I am wanted for some stuff as well, we can hide in the country and camp and cook out in the woods near the border.” I said ok, that sounded good enough for now, until we knew for sure. So we went out into the countryside, out by the border and lived in several tents on some ranch land, we worked day and night keeping a fire going for a week straight, cooking on the fire making coffee by fire, all while patrolling the land around us with A-K 47’S to make sure no immigrants or cartel guys ran into us in the night while we were out there in the middle of the desert hiding out there among the cactus and old mesquite trees in a huge

hollow behind some hills. We had women we knew like J's girl and some friends of hers who would bring us food and drinks from town so we were fed and cooked a lot out there, a lot of bbqing. We didn't bathe at all, and we mostly just passed the time by shooting targets or riding four wheelers. Keeping the fire going, and listening to music at night under the stars was the best part. I had a lot of time to sit and think to the sound of wood crackling on the fire. It was then that I decided to write about my life, to take my mind off of so many wretched things that danced before my mind. In an attempt to exercise my demons and let my spirit free once more from sleep paralysis. I would shoot off in my sleep and soar into the sky as a boy, sometimes making it as far as the moons of Jupiter before dawn brought me back into my body, but no longer. I sat out there in my tent writing and thinking for that week while we basically camped and hid from the law. I finally decided enough was enough, and went back into the city with my friend. I wanted to shower and be out of the sticks. Well, we were pretty much sold out because the police came and immediately raided the place we were at. They took my friend J to jail but didn't even recognize me. I got off and was scott free I guess, so I decided to go to the dollar store that evening where I ran into a friend, we got to talking and I absentmindedly put a handkerchief into my back pocket that I had been looking at to buy. My hair was getting long and I needed one to sleep in. Well the damn cashier saw me with it in my pocket as I was going by her to leave and started yelling her ass off about how I was a thief. I immediately ran out of there, fast, and threw off my jacket and hat in the alley, because I knew the cops would be looking for me in a jacket and hat. I got a few blocks away and realized I had left my drivers license in the damn jacket! so I ran all the way back and turned the corner to the alley where I ran straight into the damned old lady holding my freaking jacket while she was on the phone with the cops. "He's back, he's back!" she yelled into the store's phone, without hesitation I whipped my hands into the side pocket as quickly as a jack rabbit and whipped my drivers license out, and turned and ran like the devil was behind me. I ran for a quarter of a mile then got a stitch and began walking, I walked down

a few alleys, and was starting to walk towards my pals house to hide out when I noticed the parking lot I was entering had two detectives and a cop sitting in it talking from their cars open windows to each other. I was tempted to tiptoe right by them like a cartoon cat on prozac, but was already in full momentum and walked right in front of them. I looked at them with my peripheral vision as I walked by them, and sure enough every damn cop was looking right at me. I was boned. They had me on the ground in a heartbeat searching my pockets. The lead dick pulled a foil pipe from my pocket which had a little bit of hydro in it, and stood me up. "Tell us about the shotgun thing Mr. Mitton" The taller one said to me, so I explained that it was never me, I never said anything about him and never made a hand gesture at him. I pleaded with them about it for nearly half an hour in the hot parking lot alley. "Look ..we know it wasn't you," one of the detectives finally said, "We've only been looking for you to get your side of the story. You see, your pal J actually told us it was you that did it, he called us and told us that." They went on to tell me that he had been trying to make it and a few other things, like a jewel heist from the pawn shop we had all worked at, was all actually on me. I denied all of it, and went on to tell them the whole story, from when they took me in and took my gun up until now, and they took it easy on me. "Now about this other thing, robbing the dollar store, your name is well known around here because of your family in law enforcement. The dollar store said they'll drop all of the charges if you never go in a dollar store again, and truth be told you may as well just get out of town, you burned enough bridges around here. Caused enough problems for one town, Now get on home and think about it." I walked back to the home of my friend who had betrayed me. I was a joke here, and an outcast, and all alone again. As luck would have it though, It just so happened to have an old friend stop by J's house who asked if I would be interested in moving to San Antonio with him. An old pal from the gang days when I used to run with the town locos. an old pal who did tattoos but was now looking for a roommate in the city. You see his wife had moved out with the kids, much like mine had for similar reasons, and he now needed a roommate. I



was back in the game, this would be a huge foothold in the world. I could definitely reinvent myself in the big city. I can figure out who I am and carve out a life starting from scratch again. I looked out the window while hearing the cops voice in my mind saying I should leave town. My good friend Ty had come at the perfect time like a blessing from the universe when I was at my lowest. So of course I returned to the big city nights, I had to give it one last shot. What other choice did I have?

**Chapter 9. Steam On Walls Of Glass Reflecting The Winter**

I woke up in a dark room drenched in sweat. Was I leaving my body unintentionally now? Did I make it out of that heart surgery? Am I dead, and this is just a dreamlike purgatory? “The baby’s in the river!” I’d call out, remembering a time when we had been to the river as a family, with several other families that also have kids, we would all gather at the river and would be swimming together, this was shortly before Aviva had turned two. Well the baby Aviva had been watching us jump in and let the stream carry us, she had waited until her mother and I had jumped in the river rapids to try to do the same thing. She jumped in after us, and we were already twenty yards ahead of her when we sprang up from the cold rapids and stood up to our waste in water flowing about us. Smiling and unaware our daughter was hurtling towards us underwater. “The baby’s in the river!” someone had yelled out, and I turned just in time to see her tiny body flying at us under water, holding her breath and trying to swim. I began running towards her splashing and screaming, when a big guy by the riverside snatched her out with all of his might with one hand. I ran up to her with Mercy and we both held her and cried right at the side of the river. Cried about our failed love, cried about how we almost lost the baby we nearly destroyed, cried while sitting on the edge of eternity, with death looking at us with death’s crooked rotten smile. I nearly lost my baby that day, and always do lose her when I replay that day in my mind. Because she is gone either way, as we are always apart. “She’s not in the river,” I say to myself, “She’s with her mom and stepdad, and I’m in a crappy ghetto apartment in San Antonio.” I am here. I remain. Alive still, somehow, somehow still alive. I began working at the nearby tattoo shop with Ty. That was around the time when everyone I was introduced to started to know me as Mitt. Mostly because Ty kept introducing me to everyone as Mitt, instead of Roo, or even Andrew. So pretty much by accident, the first week I had moved to San Antonio I had acquired a new nickname, which was basically my last name cut in half. I really had to pay my dues to be allowed into the world of tattoo artists. I was hazed so many times, and in so many ways, but was rewarded by being allowed to clean the tattoo shop and manage the affairs and calls, which also meant that I could watch and learn in my spare time. I was glad too, it was always my desire to be a tattoo

artist, and by this point I had a decent amount of body art myself and a few piercings. Working at the shop though I was allowed to let artists practice on me when there were slow days, so slowly I started to get all of my old tattoos covered up with bright new impressive tattoos, all that reminded me of a life before, was soon covered. Especially the tattoos that I had let Mercy do on me. In an attempt to help us bond more, I had bought a tattoo kit with machines, inks and needles. I had intended to become a tattoo artist since I loved to paint, draw and design in general, I mostly wanted to keep Mercy entertained and happy, give her something to try. I let her practice on me a lot, which meant she pretty much got to torture me. Now I was on the other side of the coin, learning to tattoo. There was really more hazing though than anything else. I was shoved off of a concrete cliff in a shopping cart wearing a cape and a Darth Vader helmet on my first day there, the very first day. I was also forced to surf a drainage ditch using a broken sign as a surfboard, swimming and ingesting who knows what in a flooded runoff drain that was waist deep with stinky brown water full of God knows what, since it was all runoff from the city during the storm. I smelled so awful afterwards that I threw up about ten times. I was forced to get a tattoo while on ecstasy, I was forced to have two bloody dicks in the shape of a 13 tattooed on my ass cheek. I was also sort of a mascot, so I was making online commercials where I hurt myself while advertising the tattoo shop. I was always up to something there though, it was a good distraction from my sadness, learning the tattoo world from the ground up, starting with how clean the place has to be, sterilization techniques, bloodborne pathogen training, and of course various tattoo techniques, as well as how to make stencils and how to mix inks. All of that and the occasional beat down from the owner, because he absolutely loved hazing me, and sometimes I would fight back. The owner was much larger than me, so of course he would beat my ass, but I would still hang. I would remember all of the fights I had gotten into with Fabian, or the fights I had been in after being initiated into a gang at twenty years old. The initiation itself was five guys fighting me at once, which was the most intense moment of my young life, and then we were constantly getting into scrapes all over Uvalde over turf. It was just the way things

went in that world. You call someone a rat, they can challenge you, then you fight in the circle. I fought a few big guys who I out boxed, but ultimately was just manhandled when they couldn't out box me. I've had my ribs broken, bruises and knots on my face and head, busted lips and eye sockets, I pretty much bruised everything at one point. It taught me a lot, and now I was using those techniques to try to not be manhandled by this big tattooed idiot. I was seeing like ten women at once, and I was helping Ty sell cocaine and weed, I wasn't using though for once, mostly because Ty would kill me if he knew I was stealing from his stash. I kept myself pretty clean though in those days, even stopped drinking and smoking so much, I started riding a track bicycle all over San Antonio during this time. It was an easy way to get around the city, and actually faster than traffic at most times. I was really good at going fast on a bike, I could fly, in fact I did, and often would ride with three hundred plus riders in mass groups, and would usually place top ten every single time, top three a few times. I was really into bicycling, it was such a feeling of freedom. I was working there at that tattoo shop with Ty for nearly a year, when Ty had a falling out with the owner and ended up leaving. I went with Ty as well, being roommates we kind of stuck together, and Ty was really one of the only people that I knew there in the city. Plus we went pretty far back to small town days. We had a different sort of loyalty to one another, gang stuff. We have seen each other in every situation there is, and know what kind of guy the other guy is. The second tattoo shop that we went to ended up being totally different. I was still basically the guy who cleaned up and ran the shop, but I was also being taught more by the guys at this shop, they didn't haze me at all or make strange demands, I was treated more like an employee and eventually given love like a friend. I started to actually tattoo three years into working there, I would do small tattoos on friends that I had met through working at the tattoo shop, and even acquired all professional machines and equipment to work with. Things were finally beginning to plateau somewhat, life was mellowing out. I had moved out of Ty's place and had a large apartment with two other friends I had made. There were some complications that arose in my friendship with Ty, stuff from the past, but I didn't hold anything against him, I was just distancing

myself from him for a while as he sorted out his life. Riding was my escape, I could ride a bike for hours and hours, until my legs were burning like fire as long as I had some music in my headphones. I was in a few light altercations at first, mostly got bumped a few times by a stray fender or bumper from selfish drivers. No real problems at all until one day while out riding on the sidewalk near the mall, with music blaring in my ears, while cold December winds mixed with clear blue open skies around me, the sweet smell of winter was in the air, and I was on my way home from work, riding my bike with gusto as I had a date that night with a woman I had met while out group riding, I was coasting on the sidewalk, smiling at the thought of a real date, when suddenly, I was hit hard by a speeding car, a speeding car that was cutting through the malls parking lot to beat a red light. Probably would have been a success too. Instead he hit me, causing my ragdoll body to fly into the street about six feet from the sidewalk I had just been on. I know death had to be looking on, sneering from the top of some nearby building. I was thrown onto the hood of the car so violently that I bounced my head off of the windshield, and was then thrown into the middle of the street, right into oncoming traffic. All of the cars stopped despite the green light, as I began to rise up to try to walk, I immediately collapsed under my own weight. I looked down and in horror could see my split shin bone sticking out of my leg, with dark thick blood oozing out like thick black crude oil. I started to crawl towards the car like a zombie because the guy who ran me over was sitting there staring at me and looked dumbfounded but also looked like he was about to jet out of there before anyone caught his license plates. "You gotta take me to the nearest hospital," I pleaded, "my bones are sticking out and I'm going to go into shock soon! I can't wait for an ambulance!" Well with that the guy took pity and loaded me up into his little car, bent bike and all and began to drive me to the nearest emergency room, courtesy of his little Honda. "Let me use your phone," I said, as mine had been destroyed after hitting the street when I fell, I then called my friends at the tattoo shop to let them know in case I didn't make it, so someone would know my situation, "Hey bro, no joke, I may be dying," I stuttered when he finally answered the phone, "I was just run over and need to know where the nearest hospital is, I'm

not familiar with this area, and I'm losing a lot of blood fast." I was wincing and fighting the extreme pain, trying to keep my leg elevated, I tied a bit of rope around my leg to keep it from bleeding more. I gave the phone to the driver so Ben could direct him. After receiving the directions to the Baptist E.R. I heard the guy tell Ben "look man I'm sorry your friend hit me, I'll give him a blunt or something to make it cool." I slapped the phone out of his hand onto the car floor, "You hit me you son of a bitch!" and nearly passed out from the flare of rage. When I opened my eyes, we were pulling into the Baptist hospital emergency drop off, a group of nurses rushed out with a wheelchair and helped me onto it, then began to push me into the hospital. Out of the corner of my eye I saw the Honda speed off as soon as we cleared the door, what a piece of work, didn't even check to see if I was gonna make it. The nurses got me into the E.R. and gave me some morphine while they prepared me for surgery. "I don't want to be anesthetized." I mumbled while being sedated, "I have died before, and I don't want to go back to the moon." A few black outs later, I realized a Doctor was standing over me talking. "That morphine is pretty good huh? So you don't want anesthesia... we can give you some valium and an epidural if you like and just work on your leg like the best we can." I agreed to it and signed some paperwork. I didn't want the complications again, waking up while being sawed open, sweating every night for weeks like I had taken a shower and just laid down with no towel on. The memory of all of the sweat, so much sweat like laying in a pool of urine, like I did my entire youth, wetting the bed cause my frail body was still premature even as a teenage boy. I didn't want them to have to fight to revive me either, so it was best they just go at it like the civil war days and cut into my leg and fix it. So, I ended up with a lot of metal hammered and screwed into my leg. I woke up to a cold dark room, not one visitor. All alone, with a metal chest, and now a metal leg. I stayed there for a week, at the end the doctor came in and said, "everything is looking good so far my man, but listen I know you don't have insurance and won't be able to go through physical therapy, so I am going to let you know what you need to do to recover and live normally again..try to walk all you can to strengthen your leg, and just so you know, you'll more than likely have a limp

for the rest of your life.” I already knew that a limp would be the outcome of this encounter with a car's force, long before the doctor chimed in with his expert opinion, and to be honest after a hit like that I was really just surprised to be alive. Before they had even wheeled me into hospital, I already knew my life was changed, I knew that there would at the very, very least, be a limp. I sat in the hospital an entire week without a single visitor, and then my roommate came and picked me up. I was minus one bike since the guy that had hit me took it with him when he drove off, but as is common with the universe, equivalent exchange and all that alchemy jazz, I had two crutches now instead. I was bound and determined to walk again though, even more so, without crutches or a limp. I was supposed to remain off of it completely for at least eight weeks though. I knew that was going to go by so excruciatingly slowly, since I was so used to flying around the city on a bike and now I couldn't even walk down the hallways without any assistance . I would be spending a lot of time with my roommates in the upcoming weeks, luckily my friend let me stay without being able to work and pitch in money, both roommates were brothers, Johnny, a forty year old mentally retarded man who collected action figures, and his younger brother who was nearer my age, stevie, who worked on jet engines on the graveyard shift and was pretty much his brother's keeper. I started to help out with his mentally challenged brother since I was always home. I taught him how to use the oven and make his own food, I also taught him how to not piss all over the toilet seat by raising it, I even tried to help them have a more relaxed environment by easing the tension, so I helped him download a dating app onto his phone to meet a woman since he was always insanely jealous of his brother who would frequently bring over gorgeous women to bang, only to have them run off after being at the crib for a few hours by the harry little mentally handicapped man who resembled a mongoloid hobbit. Johnny loved to yell at the door of his brother's room while storming up and down the hallway, while Stevie was getting acquainted with his cohorts behind closed doors. I would just act like I didn't hear him yelling at the wall about how he wanted his dick sucked too. Then one night his brother nearly kicked his ass off of the balcony for busting in and slapping his ass while he was butt naked with a

woman. I decided it was time to get him a girl, to save the household, restore some peace and dignity to Johnny boy's simple toy loving life. I was gonna meddle since I couldn't leave or do much of anything else. I helped him download tinder and made a portfolio for him, said he was a collector of novelties instead of a toy collector, and he was a simple man who wanted a girl who didn't mind a crooked smile, took a picture of Johnny and uploaded it, then handed him the phone with his new profile open. "Just swipe right if you like them," I told him after adjusting his settings to older women, who were a little plus sized. Figured it was a good enough start for special ed Frodo. Sure enough, after many many swipes, he even got a few bites. I was proud to see his confidence grow, as he began messaging some of his matches on the app. I was doing good, I was doing God's work spreading hope. All from my bed no less, it had been weeks since I had been able to walk or run or skip. I went from riding hundreds of miles a week, to not being able to walk to the bathroom to take a shower. Then one day Johnny ran into my room super excited, and made me feel like a father whose son finally asked out a girl and was told yes. I felt all that and more when my special little buddy walked in and informed me that he had a date night coming up, and was gonna be picked up and taken out by a lady. He didn't want his mom, who frequently checked on him, to find out so he asked me not to tell anyone, especially not his brother. Of course on the night of his big date I told his brother. "Look. Johnny is gonna act like he is walking to the Target on the corner, (the only place he was allowed to walk to because it neighbored our complex, he could ogle toys.) He's gonna act like he's going there, but he is really getting picked up to go on a date!" I whispered/yelled, "No freaking way!" his brother whispered/yelled back at me. "So I say after he takes off, that we follow him in your cousin's car, and see who picks him up!" Our eyes all agreed, and with that we anxiously watched the minutes go by until Johnny waddled in and said he was leaving. We gave him a little bit of time to walk around the corner of the complex and go inside the store, enough time for that, then we snapped to it, they carried me downstairs and put me in his cousin Wero's car then we drove to the target parking lot. We were in full detective mode. From the driver seat Wero chimed in, "We will wait here, just



give him some time, I already know he's gonna get sidetracked in there by power ranger toys or Dragonball cards. Hell, he may not even be meeting a girl, he likes to fucking steal pokemon cards, and they don't even stop him cause he's retarded as hell and goes in there and actually does blow like two hundred every time he gets his monthly check. I'd say it's a fifty-fifty chance he comes out with a woman." So we waited an additional ten minutes then drove around the target parking lot which was a three minute drive really. We circled the parking lot once then parked at the far end of the parking lot facing the only door to enter or exit from. We waited so long that we ended up believing that he wasn't even meeting anyone there, and that he really was in there staring at toys. Suddenly Wero yells out "there he is! Look he's with a fucking sasquatch!" Lo and behold, there was a tiny Mexican hobbit man walking hand in hand with the biggest, largest blackest woman any of us had ever seen, in a thigh high skirt and high heels, making her easily six foot two, to Johnny's five foot nothing body. This lady was easily three hundred pounds. I have no idea what she thought of Johnny, but it looked like they were in for a wild night. We all laughed, hard, rolling around in our seats hard for a few minutes then yelled out all together "Atta boy Johnny! Get it!" Then the truck they had gotten into drove off. We then went home and they carried me back up the stairs and that was that... Or so I thought. The next day When Johnny finally made it home he had a huge bounce in his step and a big ass toothless grin, well he had like four teeth, maybe twelve. I could tell he was really proud though. So I patted his back and pretended I had no idea what had happened. "How did it go brochacho?" I asked him as he came into my room. "It went GREAT MITT!" He stood there a few minutes with a strange distant stare and a grin, then he vanished back into his room to play with his toys and watch "Airwolf," probably swipe more on tinder. I shook my head, "well I'll be damned, I got a special ed guy laid, and I haven't even kissed a woman in two years." I said to myself. I needed to start my rehab in a week or so though, that is one thing I knew for sure, slowly but surely get back to myself then find a special lady... maybe use the same dating app since it worked for him. I was glad my little Frodo climbed the big black mount doom, I was Gandalf beaming with pride. On

top of that, it had been four weeks, and I finally felt well enough to start slowly rehabilitating myself. I started small by walking out the front door and down the stairs a few times a day, then moved on to walking down the street to the corner store. After several weeks more I began to walk all the way to the tattoo shop, which was actually around four miles away, and it would take me an hour and a half to walk the distance on a healing leg, but I would do it nonetheless, and would then elevate my leg after I got there and did what I normally would do. I was bound and determined to begin the new year with a triumphant victory over this disfigurement, after spending Christmas and new years completely alone in bed with a mending leg, I needed to get well and back into the world. You see the world truly forgets about those mundane dead, and those who remain out of sight as well. I wanted to get back to walking normally, and without a limp, I wanted to be able to ride again as well, and not let fear control my life. That was the hardest thing to deal with after getting hit by a car, after you have been run over by a vehicle, the P.T.S.D. is overwhelming, as they are literally everywhere! Fast, or slow, it didn't matter, each car noise produced a negative reaction now. I was struggling to overcome this, struggling to get my strength back. I missed being out in the world, I missed racing on a bike without a care in the world. I have been a wanderer always, and have had a gypsy spirit since I was that wandering three year old that would pry open the screen door, then toddle through the front gate and then out into any open yard that was nearby. I was a wanderer, a nomad, always caught in the winds of change. So I was walking to the tattoo shop to work for my therapy, and I would often get a ride home, as the walk there would take a lot out of me. Until the day came when my pals all got together and bought a new track bike for me. It was finally time to try riding again. and after a few scary looks, it was suddenly great to be on a bike and riding again, even more so when we would go riding as a group, all of the boys up to no good. I was there as a broken, humble servant, glad to be alive, and back with my pals, even though none of them had visited me. It was different though when we rode together, it had a wolf pack quality, and we would cruise the streets like carnivores, you can really have fun in the city while on a bike, there is a huge riding community. I

was pushing myself to get back into shape, while getting better at riding, it is far easier learning to ride again than walking, way less strain on the metal that now lived in my leg. Life was getting back to normal, well somewhat, for some of us. I had gotten back to the apartment one evening and was settling in with a nice bowl of some hydro to smoke, when I heard Johnny yelling at his brother about something god awful, so I went into the kitchen to see what the uproar was about. Turns out Johnny had slipped up and showed his brother a picture of his tender date he had been seeing on and off for nearly a month now. His brother immediately deduced from the picture that the tinder match was indeed a huge ass man, dressed as a huge ass woman, and not a gentle loving match, at all. Apparently Johnny had been getting fucked down by that large tranny for almost a month, and was not happy with his brother and cousin finding out about it and chiding him to shame, as they both ripped into him for it, I felt terrible, I had put him onto it and made him try it out! “Big black guy in a wig huh?” I said to Wero, “Guess we should have parked closer for a better view.” Wero laughed hard, wheezing and crying, then straightened up and said, “Hey Mitt, I forgot to tell you, all of this dating app bullshit reminded me, I have a friend named Rose who wanted me to set up a date with you, she saw you on my Facebook and wanted me to arrange a meet and greet.” I was a little leery, but agreed to it as Tinder never pays off for me really, not like it did for Johnny anyway. I forgot I deleted it cause I only ever get messages from Tranny’s. I guess I could go on a blind date, I was getting more fit by the day, and really committing to improving my life, I still had a pretty bad sex addiction though, and in my loneliness I would often end up in some fairly dark corners of the internet. When you are totally desensitized to so many things, it is truly hard to be aroused or shocked unless it is just bizarre or completely insane. I would even catch myself looking at beheadings of women on Bestgore.com just to get a twitch. I was often living a shadowy life while alone, while acting very sunny and cheery while among peers, and friends. So because of these tendencies, and having been alone for so long, I decided to go ahead and give the blind date a shot. Why not? I thought, maybe this woman will be the one that helps me snap out of it, helps me to stop staring at porn and gore, and

brings me back to normal. Well, some form of normal for someone who has been through all that I have been through anyway. I had also recently discovered that my son Isaiah, well his mother, had passed away recently and at a very young age, from colon cancer, she never even made it past thirty years old. It was hard thinking of someone that I had created life with, being dead already at such a young age. I needed to get out and think, or not think at all. I was sitting on the front balcony of our apartment the night Rose was supposed to come meet me and pick me up. I was enjoying the cool evening breeze and having a smoke, when a beaten up, yet somehow also brand new Nissan rolled up and slammed right into the big bumper of a parked truck. Mouth open in disbelief I watched as this tall, short haired Mexican chick stumbled out and yelled "What the fuck who put that there!" With a puff, I smiled. I have never seen that car here before and it is nearly eight, must be Rose. I knew it would be cold later tonight, there was a chill in the wind, but I didn't bring a jacket, I remember thinking I probably won't even need a jacket. Walking down the apartment stairs to the front where she was waiting I recalled that all day I had been wondering, what sort of woman am I gonna meet tonight? Is this going to be a great night full of fun? or a night straight out of a movie about bullshit and going through hell. Well, it seems like I'm definitely about to find out. So now I'm riding shotgun with this woman, who's driving crazy fast with an open twenty four ounce cradled in her lap, and very loudly singing Spanish music out of an open car window. On top of that she had asked ME to drive her home, to a place I've never been before, drive her there and then hang out. I had said "no way, I don't want to drive," so she backed up off of the massive steel truck bumper which actually took no damage in any way, and said "well get in shorty, I've had two of these," then proceeds to fly in and out of traffic, while hardly focusing on driving at all. We sat around in her apartment for about an hour after we got there, it was already starting off kind of weird for one thing she was constantly telling me "I hope you didn't agree to this thinking you were getting laid tonight," She said this about fifteen times in the first hour, then pulled out a huge bag of hydro and said "here smoke up." I began to lighten up, like ok, this isn't so bad, some weed and beer, then maybe a little talk. Wrong, I

was mostly smoking weed and watching as Rose was going around back and forth, back and forth in her place, opening things and closing them, turning music up, then down, then coming to talk to me for a few minutes about whatever popped into her brain, then back into her room that was down the hallway behind the couch that I was sitting on. Not thinking too much about the odd woman wandering around talking to herself, I would just load a bowl and smoke it to myself then have a laugh. Shake my head at her energy, then wonder... just what is she doing every time she goes back there? That went on with my continuous smoking of this very good weed, for nearly three hours, and at one point Rose stayed in the back for so long that I started to nod off. I jolted awake and saw that Rose was mumble talking to me from across the room, something about “why did you even come over if you were so tired?” I smiled it off and said “no, no I’m ok, my eyes are just tired and I’m really high, and listening to the music,” waved her off and acted like I was listening to her and the song, half watching t.v. as well. Rose walked into the kitchen and I could hear her shuffling through drawers, I nodded off again, and jolted awake to Rose standing closer, “I’m going to smoke this if you want some” she said, presenting a meth pipe to me, I knew it was a meth pipe from seeing Terry’s cousin smoke in the old abandoned house that was her uncles. I waved and shook my head no, then sat up and had a drink of my beer and hit a little toke. I was really doing my best to be in the moment, I was watching her walk around, trying to figure her out, and acting like I was laughing at what was on t.v. while I uncomfortably sat there and watched her roll a bowl of meth around her lips, searing hot torch flames coming inches from her eyes. I chuckled and closed my eyes. Maybe this is a bad dream, since I was kind of drifting off here and there, until I heard Rose mumble, “where did I hide that gun?” I was in a state where I was so messed up, I had to fight keeping my head up, I kept thinking though, could she have spiked my beer with some pills? why the fuck does she need a gun? I could hear her shuffling all around me, moving things, mumbling to herself. I remember thinking Wero, you are gonna get an earful from me mister, then I blacked out... I jolted awake after what seemed like some sleep paralysis eternity, and saw Rose standing about six feet from where I sat

lounging with my back on huge pillows, and my throat exposed to her mercy. Rose was looking at me in the eyes, as my eyes opened, I saw a blurred form at first then Rose... with an enormous razor sharp hunting knife that had a bright orange handle. She was looking right at me. Her uneasy breathing and wild eyes told me that she had been formulating a plan long before I got there, to hurt a man. Hurt a man like she had been hurt from the look of the scar on her neck I was just seeing for the first time, now that I finally got a good look at her. I jumped up, fast, and distanced myself from the knife. "You're fucking crazy I yelled!" and moved towards the door. "Get out you rapist! You were gonna pretend to sleep then rape me!!" she screamed like a blood curdling scream with rage in it. I was just blown away. I kept my back to the wall and my eyes on the knife as I circled the room and spotted the front door, where I would be free from that death trip demon time shit, I also had no idea in any way where I FREAKING WAS. I didn't have any idea where to go, what direction home was, nothing. I was just watching her drink and drive the entire way to her place, just in awe of her driving the entire trip, so I didn't see a damn thing. Anyway, I slowly backed up to the front door and unlocked the three bolts, then very slowly opened the door and began to back out of it. "You're fucking crazy!" I yelled out as I ran out into the cold wet night, this city is so spread out, I thought, I could be anywhere and we drove for like thirty minutes. As soon as I closed the door, I heard the music go all the way up, and the same noise of feet walking in fast paced circles on a wooden floor. I looked beside her front door, there were two bikes sitting there, just begging to be ridden, and I was about to try my luck on this bike journey with no phone or sense of direction on a mother fucking kids tiny bike, but both had a flat tire, both of these stupid little bikes were flat as pancakes with dry, crusty old tires that looked muddy in the rain, her kids, wherever they were, hadn't used these bikes in a very long time, spider webs and leaves were all over them, and of course old cracked seats. "This is just great!" I yelled while throwing my arms around, time to hoof it I guess, "I'll just hoof it like a horse for hours and hours and hours across the stupid butt fucking town!" With that final curse I began walking down the sidewalk towards what I assumed was downtown, only

by the gray night time shapes of dim lit buildings in the distance could I even tell it was possibly downtown. I figured what the hell, that is a start, a direction at least, because if it is downtown then from there I know the direction of the tattoo shop and from there, the way home, peace of cake, bing bang bong. This was going to be one epic, long night walk, and it was already midnight, the clock was ticking, no time for distractions whether it is people or disasters occurring or sub mutants from the sewer nothing should slow me down from trudging home. Literally within three blocks of Rose's place though I ran into a big ass tranny just out stomping around in the cold drizzle night air in some monstrous little dress, then I accidentally made eye contact which is like a huge no no, and sure enough that was followed by a loud "HEY BABY YOU WANNA PARTY?!" I gave her a side look that said hell naw bro, while I politely shook my head a few times real fast then just kept walking through the forming puddles and sprinkles of rain. "I am gonna kick the shit out of Wero if I ever see his ass again." I said to myself, trying to hurry along like I didn't have a five hour walk ahead of me in the cold with no damn jacket. I kept thinking I'd do anything for a bike right now, anything! That single thought turned into an hour long thought as I walked for hours and hours just to get downtown, all while simply keeping my eye out for the largest building downtown as a landmark. As I got closer and closer, the looming figures in the night got larger and larger of course, telling me I was closer to home. I went under bridges or awnings when the rain would pick up, or the cold wind began to death metal blast me in the face. I was walking through parks and alleys, on sidewalks and old forgotten torn up roads, past colleges and duplexes, alongside fenced in civil war era mansions with huge Greek pillars, all with people inside safe and dreaming, or probably fucking actually, but not me I'm just fucked! I was so sore, tired, and damp, on top of that I still had at least a two hour walk, easily, once I even got to freaking downtown. That was when I saw it. There on the corner, in the rain, was a beautiful, brand new, precision track bike with all carbon fiber and aluminum accessories, no lock at all, just propped up by a light pole. It was so tempting, lip smacking tempting. I knew better though, San Antonio has a huge bike riding community which is often subject to

criminal activity. I have personally known three people who were shot and killed for their high dollar bikes, and a whole lot more who were run over and left for dead. Which meant there was a good chance this was a bait bike set up there by the police looking for bike thieves. Even if it wasn't, I have had good bikes stolen several times, it is a bad feeling, whether you deserve your bike stolen or not. I didn't want to stoop to that level so I left it and continued onward towards the monolith glass objects which were now closer than ever before. When I finally arrived downtown, I was hit by a mass of homeless people in Travis park. Like a zombie attack at night. Each guy would walk up and ask for a dollar, knowing full well that he and the rest of the shit head group just saw me tell one of the other bums I didn't have a damn dollar! I was then harassed by several cops giving me the stink eye, and of course like always, another random tranny prostitute that was just out and about being loud and noisy at three am. I knew from a certain grocery store I had spotted downtown I was closer, in fact I knew the exact time it took to ride a bike from there to the tattoo shop, because I made the ride often. It was my first stop before heading to a certain bridge many bike riders congregated at. I knew walking the same route, it would be nearly double the amount of time. I was glad that I now knew exactly where I needed to go, and didn't have to guess anymore. In half an hour I'd be on the homestretch, another hour after that and I would be home and passed out exhausted in bed. I'll finally be out of this cursed night air, laying in my cool bed with a head full of questions while nursing beaten up and throbbing feet. First though, I had to make my way on this final stretch, and oh what a stretch it was all the way up one of the longest streets in San Antonio, Military street. On top of that the route was also through one of the most dangerous and shitty parts of San Antonio where there are always gang wars going on, way worse than downtown, even though there are like fifty million cops and homeless people downtown, this particular side of town is well known for shootings late at night, as well as large amounts of prostitution and heroin distribution. I had a gauntlet ahead of me and no bike to speed through it like I normally had, no steed to carry me into battle. I was so tired at this point, I was ready to hide in an alley behind some boxes and take a nap,



more than anything I wanted to sit down and rest my legs and feet. I also knew that once my face hit a pillow, I would not want to get back up, for a long time. I was just done with the whole situation. I was walking and looked awake, but in my mind I was miles ahead of my body already walking up the stairs to the door. When you go on that kind of autopilot you also sort of open the door to the past, over thinking what could have been. I was deep in the past arguing with my former self, deep in the past, arguing cases with lost loves, and deep in the past making different choices, choices that would never be, or ever change the outcome of who or what I was becoming as each minute passed into the inescapable future of my own evolution. As I walked, seconds dragged on into an hour, and I was still pretty far from the shop, as I had been eluding any sign of people that were out after two in the morning, mostly because there was a good chance they were not the best people to bump into at two in the morning. I was dipping into doorways or hiding in nooks when headlights would pop up just in case it was a cop who would probably want to stop and ask “what are you doing out here so late?” Something I did not want to have to explain in any way. I didn’t even want to be out here, much less have to explain the reasons why. Especially after being lost and having to backtrack three times while in the maze that is downtown San Antonio. I was trudging along in the mists of early morning, still deep in the past thoughts of yore, when I heard a car pull up behind me and stop in the small area you could pull into, that I had just crossed. I had this tight feeling clench up in my gut, I didn’t have anything illegal on me, and I haven’t been doing anything illegal. I kept telling myself mentally, still, I get anxiety from the times I have been locked up, which is actually just a few times for several hours... Just a few visits will do that to you though, because jail is the absolute worst. I turned around and braced myself, ready for the flashing lights and jerk off police and there was an all black Volkswagen sitting there with the lights dimmed instead of a cop cruiser. I could make out the shape of long hair and a short round person in the driver seat. I cautiously approached the car, a little curious, also a little frightened, wondering who was stopping here. Was it Rose? come to stab me, no, too short. I had already forgotten what car she had also, but no couldn’t be her, I

thought, Rose is tall and skinny, this person is not. Suddenly the headlights turned off as the windows rolled down, the car sat there silent with the driver patiently waiting. When I got to the car window looking up at me was a fat little Mexican person, who had no apparent gender in any way, and easily could have been either gender. The person held up a cell phone which had a text prompt already geared up that read, "I am a deaf mute, do you need a ride somewhere?" I was perplexed and stared at the screen. Interesting I thought. Well after a long night of walking through late night tranny central where more than six men dressed as women asked to suck my dick, I thought, sure, why not at least get a ride a little ways down the road, by this point I am dead tired and ready to just collapse, and at least to the tattoo shop where there's an older bike stashed, is like ten minutes by car now so soon I'll be back in bed snug like a bug. I got in the car. Now although my subconscious reasoning was screaming "Hey dipshit don't do it!" my mouth said "Sure I don't mind a ride... so you're going to just go straight a while and make a right at the fourth light." The deaf mute made a sort of bark sound, put the Jetta in drive and away we went. Now I have a long history of road hypnosis, and am quite capable of falling into a dead sleep within minutes of departing on a road trip. I am a terrible co-pilot. Needless to say I was already nodding off from exhaustion and road hypnosis by the time we went a few city blocks to the first stoplight. I had to keep yelling at myself inside of my mind that I had just gone through a similar messed up situation by falling asleep on a psycho! I didn't know this genderless person at all, they could be driving me in the opposite direction of where I even need to go while just smiling at me, or to some place where they will harvest my organs or try to ransom me for money. That kind of stuff happens here all of the time this close to Mexico. I could feel my eyes trying to roll back into my head, I could feel my breathing getting heavier as my body tried to go into deeper sleep, but was able to shake it off and focus. We were indeed going in the right direction I could see, and were about halfway to the shop, so I definately needed to stay in the moment, and sleep later. As soon as I told myself that I started to get cozy again and began dozing off in the confines of the warm sedan, all dry and secure, breathing in the new car smell. I noticed that we

were nearing the shop so I signaled to the deaf mute that we were nearly there, and to make a left after the BBQ place came up. The deaf mute and I veered into the parking lot of the tattoo shop finally, mist on the windshield, the early light of dawn would be here soon. I stepped out of the car and fished my keys out of my pocket, then headed for the door of the shop. I unlocked the door, ran in and dismantled the alarm system with the same clockwork motions I did everytime I entered, then took the bike off of a hook in the ceiling towards the back of the shop. I checked the tires and upon seeing all was good, I wheeled the bike to the front by the door, then I turned off all of the lights and re-armed the alarm system. I pushed the bike outside then went in and grabbed some hidden joint roaches, all while not really paying attention to what was going on outside, or if anyone was there. Then I stepped out and locked the door. I looked up and saw the deaf mute he/she was still parked there with a cheesy grin waiting for me to come out, as soon as they had my attention they gestured for me to walk over and read their phone. I sat the bike down in that early morning mist and walked to the car, took the phone from them, and read a pre typed message out loud, "can I suck your dick for the ride?" All I could do was make a duck face and raise an eyebrow. I really needed that ride but not badly enough to be guilt tripped into doing some gay shit. I handed the phone back and without looking up said, "I am so tempted to slap you across the face with my dick." Then I remembered this pudgy person could not hear a single damn word I was screaming at the top of my lungs. For a while I stared up into the gray skies watching the rain drops fall, feeling them on my face, then looked down into the drivers face, and nodded no, while mouthing "thank you though." This night has taken so much out of me, I didn't even wait to see how they felt about me dipping out without making with the dick, it was odd too, I mean why ask to suck on mine, and not be like hey, suck on me for the ride, but whatever maybe they just craved the noodle. Probably could have just run me over and got away with it like the other guy they never found. I got on the bike and silently rode the last twenty minutes home. This city is so savage at night while the innocent and hard working people sleep, the crazies come out to give whoever has braved the darkness the willies. It would have been another

hour on foot had I not gotten that bike, but I can fly on a bike, especially at night when there is hardly any other human being around clogging up the roads. By the time I got to the apartment, climbed the stairs, and put my bike up, my metal leg was throbbing. I lay down, stared at the ceiling and let out a long ugly laugh. I couldn't believe it, what a night that was and how lucky am I to even have made it home. Laying there suffering with my life and the plights I bring upon myself, sore and barely able to move, I lay there so tired I couldn't sleep. That is when the human brain is like, "ok time to think," time to be honest with myself, and now that I think about it, my brain is always doing this to me, I had to sleep with a radio on as a kid to escape from it, or leave a fan on. I can't believe most of what I have been through though, and I'm sure not many people will ever believe me either, it is a lot for one person to survive through. I continued to take care of the tattoo shop there for seven odd years. Seven years of body art and the pain that comes with it, tattooing others, while getting tattoos myself, so many I no longer recognize the man I once was who did all of those things. The man who outlived so many people. In those years I mostly continued to stay to myself, single, and mostly just on the outside looking in at all of my friends. I was crafting my skills of creating art, and writing some here and there, but mostly just looking through stained glass windows of my soul into the life I left behind. There is a weird instant karma that hit me in this life for my sins, a crushing grasp that leaves me feeling shattered while yet remaining whole. I was pretty much alone in the later years of my life, friends that would stick by me would keep the same tired conversations going. Stuck to myself also because most of my immediate family lived on the other side of Texas which is basically seven hours away, and the few members of my family that lived nearby had disowned me for getting covered in tattoos, also because during this time I was heavily into the dark arts, so they didn't want a dark force like me around while nurturing grandbabies and families, so the uncles and aunts of my youth let me be. I had my friends, and acquaintances who were a handful of local artists. They were the best at what they did and stayed pretty busy, which gave me work as well. I was not able to keep a huge client base for my own art and tattoos, so I began to design clothing and

sold it online on the side, tattoos here and there whenever I could for a little money to get by, and of course just ran the business for my friends. I got some work being an assistant to the artist Ruiz again, but only as an assistant and sometimes as a painter, he would also pay me well to help him paint for odd crazy hours into the night, he was doing a lot of meth and staying up for days at a time at this point painting genius works of art, while making insane demands to the rich and luxurious buyers. I didn't mind it was always inspiring even in the worst parts watching a legendary artist work, and Ruiz truly was a great artist if he was anything besides a fiend. I purchased a few of his paintings here and there but ended up giving them to friends when I moved as I was always known to move at the drop of a hat, must have been my gypsy spirit that didn't mind at all. I remained there at Ruiz studios for a while learning how to appreciate art while helping the artist with his surreal pop art. I was learning so much until we got into a physical fight, so I left Ruiz yet again to pursue other work. It is hard living in the city, there are many easy jobs, but the good jobs that pay well and are respectable, well they go fast. Plus the people are savages, the streets are overrun with a shared perverseness, and selfishness. There is also a constant reminder that if you fuck up there, you will join the homeless in a sea of people with nowhere to go just like you, ho are forgotten, like you living on what the elite discard. It is better to live out where you can have some freedom, breathe fresh air not city air full of germs and pollution, where you can work to get by and just enjoy the grandeur of life's simple pleasures. City life is often confusing and unfulfilling, as you work ever on to keep up with the latest trends or fashion. When all other options are gone though, choose to be a hero if you can. I decided to try my hand at being a hero. Though I know it is a dark and dangerous business trying to do good, I have glimpsed the darker aspects of life with the all seeing eye that is the internet. I gazed into the abyss as it gazed back right into me, my astral projections blocked by the power that is leaching our minds into this conglomerate of thoughts. My mind became clouded, nurtured by electric sex and extreme violence, instead of literature and knowledge. I decided to fight these monsters the best way that I knew how, by finding them online and destroying their world, tracking

them through their digital internet dungeons, and shining the spotlight on their misdeeds. To this day I have found and slayed many of these digital monsters preying on children. I always knew deep down that I was a misguided troubled youth that would become a strange man who just wanted to do the right thing despite all that has nearly ripped me apart. Deep inside I didn't want any of this, I wanted to remain the kid at church camp, playing nintendo at night while mom cooked roast. I just wanted to remain a skinny kid that wrote poetry and collected comic books, lazy during school and swimming in the summer. Instead, I am a man seeking the wildfires that burned the poetry from my heart, although I fear I shall never get them back again, I will always carry the fire. I remember as a teen, one cold morning when my father wouldn't let me come home, and I had no place to go. I was cold, my hands and feet burned as though I was on all fours naked upon dry ice. All that I had was the book of poetry I kept with me at all times. That. And a lighter for smoking. So, instead of freezing to death, my beautiful thoughts became my warmth, my freedom, my connection to a normal life even if it were only for mere moments, while being no one and having no one. Those burning pages of poetry brought warmth back to my life, put blood back into my fingers, as they sacrificed their lives for me. I cried watching my many emotions rendered as squiggly lines on processed trees becoming ashes, I cried about the Christmas tree box I slept in the night before as the winds howled around me like dire wolves in a dirge, I cried for the many mistakes I had made even then at only eighteen years old, as I had made far too many too soon. I finally was able to destroy a few of the dragons that arose in my life though, I was able to ride onwards and become a man finally. You see some people remain children forever, because that was when something great was stolen from them, so they never evolve to a mature brain, they become locked in that exact moment, trying to crack the code. I was addicted to sex for my entire life, and running away from my problems, because those were the two main things I learned from observing the world around me. That sex and violence go hand in hand, and violence creates power, vast amounts of power. If you are a good person, you never never use it, in fact you store it and turn it into energy that pulses through what you love,

turning it into creativity that betters us all as a whole. The world is always looking to grind you up for more fertilizer to keep the weeds blooming, but roses too shall rise from the slaughter. I felt like I was a real child of the Earth doing a good deed by turning over rocks on online predators exposing them to the world. I felt like I was a warrior for the weakest creatures, by tracking their oppressors online then reporting their activity anonymously at online sites. This helped me feel again, helped me to feel like I was able to break the cycle in my life, and even end my own addiction to sex and violence which is so easily accessible online, where you can peer into any window in the world. A world that only wishes for power, and sees love as a weakness. I have since declared myself the western pendragon. A man who is ancient inside after letting his soul grow like smoke rolling out of a bonfire. A man with nothing to lose or gain any longer. A man whose skin is riddled with scars and ink my roadmap to my soul. I somehow still remain, I have outlived my curse now by several decades longer. Outlived most of the people that I have loved dearly. I remain here challenging the abyss with my ability to fly from my body and free my mind from the confines of what poisons this world. I wait for the end of time and space, to be the pendragon of the west and hide those who need to be hidden, feed those that need to be fed, and clothe those that have nothing. Look to the stars at night and wait for the thief, keep the fire burning for the cold and tired needing a ride home before their feet give out. I truly believe that by purifying my soul through a lifetime of agony that now nothing can destroy me and I no longer fear the creature that is death. I had three young teens pull a gun on me at a gas station one night, before Christmas, they were determined to kill me that night. Yet they could not, and I roared and raged at them as they sought to end me with a bullet, and I still remain. Death is a haggard dog, biting at the fleas, waiting for you to drop into a heap of exhausted bones so never give up on your dreams, or your very survival will crumble the instant you get too comfortable.

#### **Chapter 10. A Plague Of Voices In My Sea Of Dreams**

I have lived through many things by this point suffering many tragedies, obviously I haven't included every time I took a dump, or every single person I ever fell in love with, just some of the more auspicious moments and encounters that were dear to me in my timeline. I just wanted to explain my journey, the ever changing lives we all live meander in and out of each others gravities. I had to spill my beans because I didn't want to be misunderstood by the people who loved me the most but never understood my motives. Out of all things in life, people often hide their motives. That's the easiest mishap to have happened to you at the end of your life being misunderstood, it's so easy to be misunderstood especially when you live shrouded as a mystery as most fathers do. I have been many things in my life so I do not wish to be called a liar in the end. I honestly didn't think I would live this long though. Sometimes I look down at my hands and see them becoming more wrinkled and see through and I no longer recognize them. The brain inside of me still feels like it's a teenager's brain. I imagine it's like that for many people... one day they look down and realize the body's changed completely and they are a stranger to themselves. I've lost so many great loves, so many good opportunities destroyed by ghosts from my past. I decided to not really care anymore about settling down as I got old, I began to see women without the intention of claiming their hearts. I feel bad about this and apologize often for it. In life when your heart gets broken you begin breaking other people's hearts to feel some kind of satisfaction. To give yourself a smile, you use their smiles as distractions from your emptiness. You have to try to hold on to all of the love you have created in your life or you end up like this shallow creature with no dreams, eviscerated and not carrying any longer whether other people feel and you're the only one that can't. Then there came a time when the city was enveloped by a virus, a virus that had been taking over the entire world, so now on top of love problems, money problems, general anxiety, and food shortages there is now also a virus that is decimating the world.



People have become even stranger as they hide and try to reach out to other people in a completely digital world. So now fear and narcissism are taking over keeping greedy people blinded to only their own urges and needs while rumors of wars begin to smoke like kindling tinder on the edge of a roaring pyre. During these days I decided to give my life to Christ having grown up in a Pentecostal Church I knew it was the right thing to do as it seems like the world is going to end soon. There are many signs in the world and in the skies that point to it so I decided to start fighting for my soul against the greatest dragon. I have suffered with an addiction to sex my entire life, a slave to pornography and lusting over all women from young to old. It has been the hardest thing to deal with especially when I don't recognize who I am anymore as a result of it the burning lust that forever lives inside of me.. The internet provided this lust for all men with an Adonis complex, made it so easy to have everyone you ever desired at your fingertips. Sometimes it's just too much for one spirit, one body, one mind to try and overcome. But I was going to try to break the mold that I had created and try to fix myself. I have survived many things, and overcame many obstacles, not to tame myself. I knew I had to destroy all of the old habits that had been following me my whole life. Like constantly running away from my problems and moving to somewhere else, like getting rid of my lust for crazy sex, like not lying to people or wearing masks to hide my true self.. I knew that it would take a lot to break these patterns but I knew I had to try or I'd be alone and miserable for the rest of my days. Now it's hard to train a dog that is super stubborn, a dog that has a thick skull. That is what I basically have become, an animal that's hard to train, and even worse, hard to kill. The key to getting rid of bad habits is creating new better habits so I began trying to read again, or painting, I began collecting things that I had lost from my childhood as well, forgotten relics, toys and comics all tracked down. These are coping mechanisms that I was using to stop influencing my negative train of thought, to retrain the brain, something I hope you

as a reader never have to do. I knew that there would come a day though, when the end will arrive in a biblical sense, I see it coming down the road after this virus changed our lives so drastically. I could see fearful sheep falling in line for slaughter. It is key to trying to focus on something new and incredible instead of constantly going back to that which has been failing you. I never thought I would see the whole world get locked down the way it has been, with everyone living in constant fear just watching the world devour itself from hiding spots as empires imploded and as the virus decimated the world. Seems like all of the best and brightest people are actually trying to leave the planet now instead of mending it, like that's possible, just go and start somewhere new a million miles away. The way things are going, maybe they have the right idea. I don't know, but wherever the future takes mankind make sure you keep pursuing that which you are truly drawn to, even if it means having fifty jobs like I did, working for every corporation there is big and small, do what makes you unique. It seems like this world will be covered in war soon, a war followed by another war. I don't really mind though, my mind travels far from this place, and when I see fit, I live in the past to escape this grim present state of affairs. You see I really have figured out that the closest form of time travel there is, it is only through music that we are truly transported to another place in time. Music is the key. Music, scent and taste, can really take you back to another place, and if you close your eyes at the right moment, it is like you never left. I realized this one day long before I grew old. I figured it out when forced to cope with an extreme situation. The mind and soul is all electricity, you can control this electrical oddity if you ever figure out how to get the combinations right in your own unique timeline. For me, that realization came thundering at me like a herd of elephants trampling a village. This was while I was getting tattooed as a certain Mastodon song was playing over the radio. Just so happened to be the exact song I was listening to one day as I let Mercy tattoo me. Now with my eyes shut tight, the grimace of exquisite torturous pain, and

that song playing as it was on both occasions. Both times having to combat extreme pain with breathing exercises, and deep meditations. I was immediately transported to the moment before. As though I was in the very room and never left. I honestly believed that if I opened my eyes I would see my toddler waddling by smiling as her mommy tattooed me as I was lying on the little couch. I could have sat my hand on the ground and felt my old carpet and the dusty smell that lingered from it. It was the same moment essentially. To me anyway. So I often time travel with music, I let it take me back to when I was happiest, and luckily most of those moments can be tracked to a song or a scent. I let music transport my soul way farther than my spirit could ever astral project to, as the world loses all hope of ever being restored to what it was before the virus, as all sanity departed from every smart phone carrying curved backbone having narcissistic humans left on the planet. I let the music take me into the past. I decided to end my time being fashionable as I struggle daily with my demons, as I watch the sky for a burning messiah, or meteors, or nuclear missiles. The year of the virus was truly the beginning of mankind's doom. In the face of a dying planet that has lost all of its biodiversity, we realized we are the virus on this creation, our spiritual drought, our spiritual famine, lead to this madness in men. Then to make things far worse the world decided to also go to war with reason and logic. I will never understand how we destroyed the jewel of the universe as I wave goodbye to mother Earth while flying in my dreams. If only you arise again like a phoenix out of despair then maybe your new caretakers will be ever humbled with flowers at hand instead of weapons of destruction like we the fore bearers. I know there will come a new day when all that is golden will remain virgin. Such is my empathy, watching the world die that I brought my children into, such is my feverish daydream while in hell, watching my species regress because of technology, all in real time no less. We think we have it all figured out, as we take everything on this perfect orb for granted. As a kid my dad would always say, "your eyes are bigger than your

stomach,” whenever we were over zealous, or greedy. seems to sum us all up as a species. As a singularity though, I hope my life can be seen that way, like my eyes were bigger than my stomach for a good reason, since I was always going for greatness and biting off more than I could chew. I never quit fighting for my place in life with the time I was granted. Seems like from the start I have been dodging death, like most people do once or twice maybe, I did it the most. I am glad to be a new creation in my old age, I never thought I would make it. So congratulations another humanoid turns into a mutant old person, a creation of God. We humans like to think we are the only creation that feels these deep complex emotions, that nothing else has a purpose like us, instead of embracing all life and nurturing it. I say never forget that all things matter in life, from a single word departing your mouth down to the tiniest seed we have planted in the soil or in a woman's body. We are actually very small in the scheme of things, we are just another cog in the mechanism of time and space, there are several things working just as hard or harder than us, like grass for example as grass is the largest organism on the planet. We humans take grass for granted every day as we cover it with asphalt and concrete, something so simple that is keeping us alive with oxygen, enriching our soil so we may eat, doing more for us even more so than the trees that we cut down. Keep in mind though that all things matter and are precious to God, since the way of life we know may be gone one day, gone the way of our dreams and hunger for life, always remember you lived a good life if you lived free even a single day, simply because you are alive. I know I am glad, despite all of my failures. Sitting here thinking of you my loves, alone under a tree after mowing all day, cold drink in hand, much older now than I ever imagined would be possible for me, having seen so many lovers and loved ones...reduced to daydreams. All that seems to stir in my mind now though, is a thought. A thought that I cannot shake. That smell of fresh cut grass that is so nostalgic, so appealing, is actually the grass's way of screaming. This macabre thought has always

haunted me, even more so now that I am nearing the golden years of my life. I cannot seem to get past the mindless destruction of this planet, and the uncontrollable hunger mankind now has for self indulgence. Including myself and my sins. I wish to God I had followed so many different paths. I may not know so much regret had I simply made better choices. Who knows how the universe works or what is even in it when you are just a speck of tiny black pepper in the scheme, all I know is that with one long cigarette drag, and a sigh, and I'm right back to needing more, cutting more grass, trimming my own bangs, pulling teeth, banging my own gun, banging all of the women that I lust after. Piling up plastic toys, with paper trails and towers of debt all around my carcass as it sits in a tomb. My fears have been born unto a woman, made flesh so that they may destroy me. I often wake up and think that I am still the man that I was five years ago. That man is gone though, and I can't even remember who he was five minutes ago. I have seen the moon turn red many times at this point, and am now watching as the winds of change shift yet again. Swaying in my mind like tree limbs that you gaze up into on a friday night in the summertime. That sweet smell of blooming flowers mixing with the heat of the day, two shapes at midnight enjoying a cold drink after so many secret glances. The feeling you get in your stomach, that burning sensation that follows fear or excitement, it is the best feeling that you will ever get in your life. I cannot help but wonder how intense that feeling will be when it is finally my time to follow so many that have passed before me, so many too soon. I wonder if I will embrace the fear, or give in and plead and beg for one more breath of air. I have survived death's cold embrace so many times now, I even walked away from a car accident recently. My spirit was looking on as though it were the lead cameraman in a movie. My back broken, my face broken, my ribs cracked, I crawled from the wreck and walked away before the destruction could envelope me. I lived through that, and this time death didn't even bother coming for me, it was too routine at this point, I was not even scared any

longer. All that I wanted was to see my children's faces one last time. Smell the air in the forest one last time maybe. Wander along the highway one last time. My spirit will never be confined to one heaven, I will journey far into the universe when my electricity finally leaves my body. I will live again in a more pure form, free from the burdens of negotiating with my inner demons. "In this life I will never fail any of you ever again," said the broken man, the man who was gripping the edge of the cliff, the edge of a knife, in the tenderest part of the fleshy grip. I feel now as a matador that has pierced the bulls skull with a sword just as the beast's horn penetrates his racing heart. I never figured myself out, never knew who I was, and it has made a fool out of me, so many times. I wonder how many people are made sick by trying to become their true selves? There is surely a withering lily in the dimly lit valley, as this vessel becomes more resistant to transmogrification. I have to leave my body at night, these days, or the sleep demon comes to sit on my chest and taunt me. I know that one of these days my magic will wear off, and I will finally join all that died before me in the fold. I truly hope the afterlife is halloween colors and vivid appreciations for the vulgar hungers that persist in humanity. The longer I live, the less good I see in living. My pursuit of God has left me stranded in the abyss that is the world, stranded and confused as I hover in between life and death in this astral form. I could have been a super hero, but I was dragged under by the weight of the stone that I tied to my own foot. I watch myself living through so much, as family members perish, as my grandparents all aged and died, as my children are now old enough to pursue their own interests. Is this life? watching your mind and body diminish as those feelings you created perpetuate through the bodies of the new you that you created out of lust. I can almost feel again, I think to myself, as the comets fly by our stratosphere, carrying the frozen mists of ages past. We BBQ and listen to the crickets as doom approaches. We have softly tuned radios humming old songs as the universe's mechanism pulls at ancient prophecies. Here, I became a man, finally, in my old age.

When I outgrew the need for possessions and beauty. I hope that my children never know the burdens that I have known. I hope they never feel the shackles that I have felt. Nothing stings more than seeing your own flaws passed down to another human being. Especially one that you love so much more than you ever loved yourself. I realized that it is the year 2023, and when I was a teenager my favorite cartoon was sealab 2021. That seemed inconceivable to me, that time frame, and now I have surpassed even that which I had perceived as the distant future. With that in mind, I began to make changes that would benefit my life in its later years. Especially making peace with the thought of dying. I began to read again. Even as much as two or three books at a time, all from philosophers and ancient religions, I began trying to fathom the mystery that is my body and mind, only to realize that they were never truly mine, and that I still have no idea who I really am, even after all of this time. My father had a family and a career by my age, several cars and a house, I am a total failure in that sense. I lived by trying everything, but I failed all those that came before me, by living on with their sins in me and replicating their mistakes. I hope that my children find their roots early on, my story stretches far and wide to many places and people. I wouldn't even begin to know where to start when listing each one, or lost loves, or the many other near death adventures that were thrown upon me. The thing is, when you think you are unique and have seen and done it all, someone's story tops yours with one more good clean version of something that was thrust upon their life. Truth is, I wish I were a simple man. A man with a linear existence, instead of valleys and peaks. I think my destiny is calling me to liberate, and rebel, until I am riddled with old age. I was created to wander far into the horizon. way ahead of the others. I can honestly tell you this though, after a life of adventuring, and wandering, the most important lessons I have surmised from this life long social experiment of a life I have lived, are these honest notions of a wandering poet. First, the only form of time travel that we as a sentient but physical being may

experience, is through musical, scent, or taste memories. That is the only feasible way a creature of flesh and blood can transmogrify within this universe's boundaries and laws of known physics to fathom the depths of time, and live. I have also learned that many humans leave their bodies in their deepest sleep, when the spirits are one with the universe, their electricity escapes and meets with other souls in what we perceive as dreams, because of this the lord of death has figured out ways to keep humans from enjoying this deep healing sleep, with the aid of electronics and portable phones, these stifle the ability to manifest true deep sleep, especially when mingled with other inhibitors, particularly one that most humans love so much now, which is cannabis, these things stifle the true spirit of the divine animal that is mankind. I have also surmised that it truly is wise to never leave home without a handkerchief. I mean it, never leave home without one, or you will be sorry. If you are lucky enough to have a place to lay your head and call a home, that is, I recently have been lucky enough to kill my wanderlust and found a home to make my own. A place where I know where every tiny spider hides, a place where I can sit with the garage door open and smell the rain. A place to trim and count every blade of grass, as though it is my own square portion of this Earth that God made for me to tend. I do not discount being free and roaming the land, only it is far better to have a place to let your roots take hold. I do not know how to hold on to the emptiness of life at my best moments, I cannot imagine the despair of having no one left to love in life, and no place left to wander to. I do know that I have seen and done enough to live several more lives, and that I can find solace in the inspiration that I have given with my endurance. If for some reason however, you doubt my story reader, then find me, or those who ran with me. I have not roamed too far from the city lights or the creature comforts that come from crawling out of the sticks. Here in the Babylon of my life my character never developed and I still make the same mistakes daily, So I'm easy to find, another thing is that unlike many you come across who fabricate great deeds and have



nothing to show for it, I do. Those who have overcome great odds, or have done as much as I have with little to no money or status, as I have, but cannot show you any scrap of proof, well I say to you I have the scars to prove this grand elaboration, and in some cases a living person to testify. I can lead you into the desert to a place where there are no emotions, a place where the only things that matter are the hard truths of the universe. That is a place where your fantasies of truth are easily shattered, because you realize that you really are just an atom, filled with atoms, a mere speck in the spectrum of the dizzying heights of madness that are revealed in the absence of light. The great mechanism of the void, that abyssal daydream of a crying God. A God pleading with millions of people just like me to love and revere him, millions of bent back mortals leaving their bodies in their sleep, only to feverishly return to their flesh at dawn with the thought “I should’ve died young, when everything was fun... If only someone truly loved me.”