

WRITER'S BLOCK

My new career would have never taken off if I was still subject to my writer's block. As I feel my hand move along April's body, I can sense an excitement fuel my imagination. The muscles in her legs give reply to my caresses and I bury my hand in these lines. She turns her head to give a sign of a developing zeal. Her thighs pull up at the knee as I follow her gesture. Her inner thigh is so smooth.

–I know that you want me.

For once I do. And I can feel my imaginative power sharpened by this progression. And in each step, I sense an affirmation of our time together. When we discussed the shortcomings of representative art. Or when we planned her art show, a mixture of sound and images. Or how she tried to confront the success achieved by other less creative, but more aggressive artists.

I doubt that her dentist lover has given her the same kind of encouragement. Here my fantasy hit the same wall. Restrained in the dentist's chair without anesthetic waiting for the drill.

April blindly attained the Elysian fields. She walked on bed of flowers with her eyes focused on a her own morning star.

When she first moved in with the dentist, she had come back to get her stuff. She wanted me to convince her to stay with her. She saw my collection of videos.

–What is this stuff that you're looking at?

–Do you want me to say it's art?

–Is this why you lost interest in sex. Is this the kind of woman that you'd rather hang out with. Have you been having sex with one of these girls?

–It's not like it a catalogue, and I can just order one of these girls up my place.

–Then why are you watching them? It's not like you just started since I left.

It was if they had told me something about her that I never could say—something that she had not realized well enough to say to me. And I felt that if I kissed her at that moment that I could have brought all those moments, all those girls together at once. Even so, I feel even more attached to that moment.

But she was screaming at me. And we felt like we were light years apart from each other. Somehow in the midst of all this turmoil I got that photo of her. And now my imagination seemed to bring it to life. And only he could arrest my fantasy.

Without his influence I think the fantasy could be more powerful than ever being with her. It is my way of getting back at her for all that had happened between us. The curse. The very thing that she despised, the pornographic, keeps her alive in my imagination. And she who was so devoted to depicting the human figure has the image of her body burned on my brain.

Her body is almost made of plastic, and its lines cling around me. But these fibers seem to squeeze tighter and tighter. And I can hear his laugh.

THE LOVER

Lover, what's the price for your freedom. Each part of her body had been rented out to her former lovers and as I touched her body I recalled these intrigues.

–They pointed at my breasts and they laughed I knew that they were talking about me and they wanted to touch me and indeed they were touching me. It made me all warm inside.

--I don't suck penis.

The feeling of his penis inside her became so captivating. She wanted to surround that feeling. The gross, physical reality of her sex became so concrete by being utterly abstract. She was projecting that engulfing back onto his penis. And she wanted and wanted and wanted it. Wanted to take back that feeling. But in that effort she let more of herself go to the lover. To suck his penis was to think about nothing but dick. And in those moments when his intimacy seemed to desert her, she sought the same level of devotion in other guys. Huddling over in a crunched up Volkswagen and going down on some guy that she hardly knew. And for that moment she was taken by his, not her, vulnerability. And she took that in more and more.

–Can you take me inside?

–I have a boyfriend.

And this stranger wondered if he subjected himself to more of this, would he lose all sense of proportion in the rest of his life.

On one such encounter, she felt her strategy placed in doubt. Again stranded with some guy in a car, she felt herself immersed in this alcohol and pee-soaked world.

–Is this what my relationship is worth, she wondered to herself. And she felt herself coming kamikaze down into her self-made explosion.

She liked this. She liked it more than the programmed emotions that was parceled out by her lover. This made her afraid. How could she ever hope to sustain anything more than this random encounter?

The lobes of her perfect ass seem to sparkle in the heat of passion. As my hands spread across them and squeeze them, I feel gratified that I could erase the imprints of a former suitor. Her she recalls the session during eighth grade library hour. She let him reach under her panties. And his little hands treasured her firm behind. But this was where she stopped the exploration.

Now I wander around the fleshy cheeks, and curled in the forbidden crevices my tongue finds its rest. Gentle licking. And a more profound invitation.

–Don't do that.

At no other time did his erect penis ever seem so formidable. And she knew that her pleasure to this point had not been sufficient. Don't, well... What she had given up. A guide to that deep tickle. And then you seemed cut in two, welcomed to a new brutality. Something separate from you that really focused your lust. And from this point you led the intensity. You had yielded to the insertion of his penis, too much pain. The buggery.

In piercing the thin membranes of her inner cavities he found himself drawing blood. Face to face with this, a legacy of raw power, I am bewildered. I teeter before the full impact of this intensity. It starts to uncover desires in me that I hate to admit, but ones in which she seems to take particular delight. Her escapades have driven her to a point that anything less lacks the ability to stimulate. And the fear that I might enjoy the same quality of dominance confuses me even more.

–Don't do this.

Where she has abandoned the least semblance of a sexual boundary and where she crosses over to the frenzy of these unleashed energies.

If I allow the tension to release, I might lose the profundity of her sexual dynamic.

—Sometimes I think that you're afraid of me, afraid of what I tell you about yourself. You were sort of a phony when I met you. Now you've almost reached the style of lover that I've always dreamed of.

YOUR STORY

I meet you in the sexual underworld of Charleston. I am already immersed in the clandestine intrigues of the respectable libertines. Only their masquerades sweeten the lazy nausea of the city's tradition. I felt that my jaded nature had found its check in your apparent naivete. Maybe you would be the willing initiate into my debauchery. But your apparent lack of experience was hardly in evidence when I heard you talk. You found it easy to burn through the hypocrisy of the city's aristocracy. And I was seduced by your string of commentary on the dead end presented by this underworld.

We became fast friends. It was at this point that I appointed myself as your biographer; you adopted me as your ghost writer and felt at totally liberty to divulge your story to me.

You were waiting for a train at the Marta station in Atlanta. A stranger accosted you and was seeking sexual favor. Desire had never touched you in a such a precipitate way before. Only a stranger could engage you in such stark encounter with pleasure. Why had you not avoided his advances?

Years ago you would have been aghast to imagine yourself participating in such a secret society. Now you pretend that you are partaking in a coffee group or a sewing circle. It would help no doubt if you had paid better attention to the reading assignments before you signed up for this group. Or if you had better contemplate the geometrical arrangements that this society would challenge you with. That you would need a mirror both to brace yourself against the monster that seems to so attract you and to fortify yourself for a further metamorphosis of your sexual tastes.

Nothing is shown in the open, nothing is risked, nothing is lost. But the vortex that now gazes back at you is the basis for a meditation on offenses past. Either you are seeking absolution for deeds yet undone or you are trying to arrest the free fall that now appears certain.

How in the midst of all this can you still believe in some grand design to this universe? More like a Grand Inquisitor. So that you might make sense of this torture you think that if you write his name on the sides of building that he will appear to you. He has already been a part of your experience and you failed to call him by his name.

So we are under a pretense that you have stopped by the wrong rest stop and that you are seeking directions back to the main road. In this spirit, you can begin a self-examination. How you have been constantly trying to avoid these devilish circumstances and they in turn have picked you out as their most likely victim.

You long for a day when matters of the flesh were as remote as possible from your everyday world. I am take in by the rather saccharin origins of such a libertine. Behind it all I see some cosmic coupling that ties you to an absurd universe. Something left inside to ferment. Hence you seemed attracted to great divide. A galaxy of invention cleaving together. Against the rather infernal motive that underlay your vision, words attained a liberating magic. If you ignored the flesh because it weighed you down to the earth, then words inspired lofty passions. A refusal to be taken in by the most mundane concerns of those around you. Beat you if they

must but you would not surrender your rendering of your world in verse. Dragged down by their prosaic commands, you dulled their sharp rebukes with rhyme. They feared your poetry because it meant shutting down their moral regime. A sprite! You engaged the darkness with an eternal lightness, and they fell before your humor. Lest you might occupy a day with dread. The butterfly bounced gaily away.

On first view nary a dark cloud could penetrate your radiance. But the storms blew far off. And their portentous horizon threatened. As if a hand reached across you and traced its dark blot. And the stain so enraged you by its mass that you could not shut down its trespass. Where was the point that this darkening has proceeded too far. Where the daises seem rusted by some invading hue.

In this storm you felt the reach of an invisible hand. Your cooperation with this touch released an incredible shame in you. Sunny climates no longer offered protection against this intrusion. You wanted the punishment that you had previously blunted. Punishment now provided a perverse thrill for you. But where your previously angelic turn had created some resentment against you, your new imbalance still remained relatively undetected. It was not enough to believe yourself damned. You needed to make those around you aware of your new fate. Hence, the attraction for misdeeds that you used to avoid.

You needed to recruit accomplices for your adventure. You remembered stealing a necklace from a playmate. Of course, you couldn't wear the purloined jewelry out. So you made a pact with your mirror and delighted in the brazen image of you dancing naked before the glass wearing only the necklace. Somehow you were already transgressing the images of childhood, and you hoped this offense might suggest some adult deviance.

Thievery was not sufficient to crown your pact with darkness. But certainly you loved displaying your treasures before your reflecting companion. Such childish debauchery no doubt required confession and forgiveness. Since you wished to resist any form of restitution, you needed to avoid detection of your riches. You kept the private dance going, but then at other points you let despondency serve as your contrition. Hence, a cycle was born and this led you to finer and finer forms of personal delight. Sure you avoided gossiping about your compatriots. But you could not avoid reasoned assessments of their transgressions. Occasionally, you shared these judgments. But too often you had to fend off their darts, and you felt too perceptive to kill them with your cruelty. You reserved these more severe judgements for private. And in public you led the offenders into predicaments too overwhelming for their limited wits. Thus, a romp through unfamiliar woods or the meeting with an unfriendly neighborhood pet.

As much as you were in the forefront with your adventures, you held back significant moments of your experience from the public eye. Then desires for revenge offered no succor for the depths in which you plunged. And only an attachment to some grand design could make you feel there was some purpose for your condemnation. As of yet, you had done no deed that seemed to allow such a settlement. And your appeals seemed entirely in vain. The glamor of the day turned into a mockery, a prelude to your nightmare. And the sweat beat you down in preparation with the ghostly encounters after dusk.

Is this why these visitors now haunted your shadows? You found yourself yielding to their desires. You mimicked their pleasures. And thought you were in paradise when they seemed to have arrived at ecstasy. The wailing from the dark corners of your room. Lights flashing. This hurt your eyes. Still your desire to lead these profane rituals. Where previously your rhymes had a life of their own, this shadowy existence had a personality of its own. And

you became entirely proficient at this assault against yourself. These entities reached out of your eclipses.

Heaven help that these monsters might emerge when you surrounded yourself with your sunshine companions. Sure you were given to your secret maneuvers, but they could never imagine a pact entered in under such perfidy. You coveted their innocence as it hid their more profound yearnings to stain their purity. You watched their hands wander in imitation of adult betrayals. And you tried to warn them of the forlorn results. But that would only inspire their pursuits. In the end, you would seek such alliances.

At this point, you would rush home to consider what remained of your girlish crushes. Down deep you fears that your companions knew. Knew that you had nothing to share that could make up for their lack of acquaintance with their own deviousness. The more that you felt crushed, the more that you felt its pain. You sensed rejection before the projects could be formulated.

Part of you hoped for a compatriot more brazen than yourself. Someone who could shake you to the ground of your existence. You knew that they all were faded borrowers ripping their schemes from misguided parents. But if you could at least temporarily engage such conspirators. Hands that did not fumble clumsily. Dirty little boys who moved with clear direction. The prospects attracted you but the consequences still frightened you. For investigating such a path, you felt the need to descend one more stair into your private hell.

To hide your new passion, you surrounded your world in pastels. An occasional rendezvous with the crimson pirate needed to be compensated with a bath in the cleansing waters. And the deep colors faded before the wash of chlorine. You could smell the cleansing. And you covered your body.

Better still, the security beneath your covers. And you pulled the white starched sheet over your head. It all had the antiseptic clean that you had been craving. And now you felt the further thing possible from your fallen nature. This is where the universe responded to your confusion. This was the desired order of things.

Someone found it his sick game to lock you in closet and there you learned that the darkness has a solid form. Just as you understood that this form embraced you, so you felt it could offer you a path of escape. It had swallowed you up and you were going to take it apart bit by bit.

Still you felt this imprisonment had to be some punishment and you devised some offense on your part to merit such a fate. And the more that you felt the cloak of darkness, the more that you drove inward for the source of this exile. Nothing could deflect the weight of these chains. There was no mirror to absorb and reflect your desire to get away

There and only there you hoped that someone might rescue you from this morass. And you toiled in the darkness under the vague hope that you might find a way out. This hope became cloaked in a new reality, as the visitor emerged all ready to break into your imprisonment and spirit you away. In time the visitor would dominate this darkness and bless your universe with his charms. And those charms would dominate all your imaginings. Worse, you would be totally susceptible to comparable appeals in your everyday world as you would yearn for his return. Any occasional encounter might offer some glimpse of the mighty pleasures that had haunted your wandering nights.

In the indulgence of your vanity you felt superior in moral culture to all other creatures. Your heart swelled to the edges of rapture as you were filled by these feelings of pride. In this vision you felt yourself spread out before the sky for all to see. Since you had given so much of your life to this sacrifice, your passions had been curtailed. So it was easy to give yourself up these delights. You did not see this indulgence as a corruption. Rather you felt that you were only sharpening your conscience in a way to leave no other equal. Your eyes looked in disgust at the creature that you were. But in the extremes of repulsion, you achieved a most extreme transport and became lost in self-admiration. Thus you could correct your imperfections by a falling towards correction.

–I do bad things. I'm not always consistent. But I am constant in my desire to be saved.

You felt both entirely alone and entirely desired, and hence everywhere connected. Everyone wanted you. And you surrendered to the absurdity of this desire. And the more you felt this new perfection, the more that you thought yourself beautiful in this intense light. What else did that beauty do but emphasize your purity. And the more pure that you felt, the more that you felt blessed.

Here lay a severe discrepancy. How could you really trust that purity if you were never subject to temptation? In that light you had to consider all the bizarre predicaments to which you could subject yourself. No temptation would be worth its salt if it couldn't bring to a boil the passions. So your imagination became an accomplice in trying to shore up your virtue. It was almost an internal battle to set off this new purity. You needed sufficient passionate interest to make temptation a real feature of your experience. But your will needed to be sharp enough to undercut any process of temptation.

At first, the solution seemed obvious. Short-circuit the temptation before it had a chance to take form. And this was the technique that you perfected. Perfected because this formerly had been your manner. Nevertheless, you breached a strange fear—that maybe you were finding delight in the temptation. If you gave into this feeling, then you lived for the temptation. Would such a position towards temptation imply that you were indeed endorsing the object of that temptation? This fear was becoming particularly ugly. It was starting to drag you down. Down, but this was also the source of a hidden pleasure.

–If I taste it, how can I ever avoid its influence.

Now torn between seduction and resistance, you required a special force to intercede. More than your purity, you found a unique quality to the graces made available to you. Did these powers permit, almost necessitate your descent into the world? They gave you licence. With that licence, you could explore the roots of your pleasure without ever acceding to the effects of such immersion. You could taste without ever being overcome by the poison. You could sample without ever being weighed down by the feast. Here was your diet—delight without aftertaste. You were becoming so adept at adorning your beauty that you could participate in this investigation. And in this reconnaissance you noted all the highlights. You catalogued. You collected. You sought remedy, antidote, counter spell.

Here came another dilemma. Were you becoming accustomed to the dark arts where the tainted rewards to the senses only meant enslavement to the overall allegiance to the body? Was temptation in its massive form enacting its toll? Even though you supposed that you were not imbibing in these wonders, you were now a devotee of all the pleasure that you had formerly eschewed. You had simply become adept at the razor. But piece together these individual events, and you were immersed in the seduced's lament—Oh my!

You were really torn apart. You had perfected all these arts with the desire to enhance your virtue. If you let go of these crafts, then you would also lose touch with your ability to resist temptation. It wasn't so much that you were given to the artifice. You had learned to trick sin, and you needed to maintain this cunning if you ever were to stay immune to the appeals of the world.

Hence you terminated your conflict by your new devotion to the body? How else to eliminate the influences of corruption. Evil had taken the form of disease. Anything that preserved your health was only a step towards further rescue from the tempter. You believed more than ever the natural inclination of the body towards good.

—Confessor, is this not the natural order? We have been created to see the world thus. The more perfect our bodies, the more perfect our souls.

—That would be true if there was not a natural bent in the body towards sin. That is the whole scheme that grants revelation the privilege over pure feeling. You cannot validate emotion on its own account. Only when it is informed by a higher inspiration.

But you felt that you already had access to that higher revelation. And the more that you crafted your body to take that imprint, the closer you felt to the heart of that revelation. You were indeed blessed. For a moment, an intense desire seemed to burn in your heart and inflame your whole body. You allowed the onset of these feelings. You relished in their delights, but you cut short the completion of this fantasy as it would only result in impoverishment of the spirit—oh thanks!

So in the intervening duration, you worked to maintain the purity that had been strained by your wandering. A flaw tore apart your being as you had always used adornment of your physical attributes as a way of attaining greater inner perfection. But this exterior ornamentation only made you prey to vanity. You had almost included this vanity at heart of your devotion. This had become your pattern of sanctity. How could there be any distortion in your aspirations.

You worked to reorder your pursuits. Maybe it was not the appearances that had dazzled you. Just your manner of devotion. You looked at yourself in the mirror and still considered that you were blessed. What you had undergone was hardly a real temptation. What if some disease ravaged you. Now that would be actual temptation.

So you returned to an image of sweetness and purity. Under these circumstances, you could continue your fealty to the mirror. So you sought a absolute stillness with which you could preserve your attractions. You would not let them spin around themselves and seek acknowledgment in others. They would find satisfaction in themselves.

You sat meditatively at your table. Occasionally a glance over at the mirror. All this balance by a gaze upwards. You sought inspiration from on high. You deserved such recognition. The glow of the believer shone on your face. You felt your spirit arise in your elevation.

So you were the attendant at heaven's gate. The increased sense of uplifting made you feel that sacred embrace. Everything vibrated with that communion. You had been assumed into that inner congregation. Your whole body bore the imprints of holy desire. You had traded a part of your body for something far greater. More than ever you feared eternal damnation if that beauty suffered any blemish.

Now the only access to eternal damnation was through impure thoughts. They could clothe the transfigured body in vulgarity. You resisted. With each day your self-admiration increased. Each day you appeared more and more perfect. Or you would isolate some flaw to

pretend that you were not absorbed by your overall perfection.

Deep in your heart you reserved a place for a supreme being who might offer you the crowning achievement for these feelings of superiority. That he might adorn how you look with an aura so blinding that no form had borne such an imprint.

Any taint might appear to drag down my commitment to my virtue. But I know how I can resist. I know what are my origins. So you turned to this model that you could adore. Not some shell, but the source that you could worship without any reserve. Now, you were attracted to that essence that would never perish. You had discovered the genius the spirit to crystalline network. With study you submerged in this myriad. Only untold self-denial could prepare you for the inevitable magnetism that drew you to this one, this place. In this overpowering moment you felt the voluntary pull that engaged all your resources?

–To resist would be torture. I am yours.

Since you had become a spiritual intimate, you feared that others might be envious of your rewards. You needed to extend your study to ward off these vain influences. You sought a purity of intellect to correspond to what had transpired in your soul.

You found a testament of faith and with this work you had your source for inspiring passages. These you copied into your instruction book. Then you transferred the lessons to your everyday exploits. There was still a glee that carried through your meditations. You feared that others would ridicule your discoveries. That they would mock your diary entries. that they would never understand the spiritual passion that enveloped your being.

You had a dream that was haunted by fire and a scream. Someone had come in your room. They had pried in your diary. They had tried to destroy the symbols of your commitment. This made you ill. The nightmare was becoming too real. You could sense their eyes always watching.

–What do you want from me? You cannot have it. He has show his love for me. He has come for me. He is my lover.

This nightmare became more complex and merged into your everyday life. Something that was going on.

–This force seems to be molesting me.

How could you ever preserve you virtue if the temptation had made itself into your protected chambers. You locked the door and remained in your room for days. You fasted. Even your body started to seem foreign to you. In this you risked the gravest temptation—that you might find delight from your own touch. This fear became all the more oppressive.

You ran from your room. You were a raving lunatic.

–I need to touch of a man.

The halls echoed with your cries.

You despaired to the loss of your virtue. Even your form seemed to bear the burden of your fall into sin. Why had he not come for you? Why did he not rescue you?

–You can't give in to your feeling of depression. They will only make you more susceptible to depravity.

–More, less, it's all the same disgust.

–If you don't change your ways, you will have no concern for others and even less for yourself. You will give in under the least pretext. Do you not see how far you have pushed yourself and how lost you are becoming? Is there no way that you can see the

totality of your error. You are emphasizing your isolation so that you seem beyond salvation. And in that state, you only make yourself a worse candidate for temptation.

>>Worse, you are creating a ready-made personality who will resist all attempts at saving. You are only enhancing your vanity. The greater that you are plunged in this vanity, the more the appeals of flattery will be the only entreaties that you can feel. You will bath in the depravities of your lost soul. There will hardly be hope of rescue for you.

>>Can you not recognize the personality that you are fashioning. You are enhancing her mask and hardening your heart. You will become adept in the ways of complement. And it will be so easy to accept the gifts that accompany your new state. You will start to expect such tributes. Your heart will pine when you do not find such rewards. So you will slip deeper and deeper in that same illusion. Where is there rescue to be found.

–I have always found support in the past.

–Again, you see your pride intervening. You have fallen even deeper than I once thought. Where once I felt hope, I fear that you now resent any effort to offer you aid.

–But all along, Confessor, you have offered me the support that I need.

–You think that you can even seduce me into your way of seeing things. You are indeed beyond help.

–Then you are only condemning me to a worse despair.

–I am only trying to break down those idols at whose altars you now worship.

Smash this idolatry. Smash all reflection of such base devotion.

–Where then is my hope?

–Can you admit to the depth of your corruption.

You were frightened. You felt that you had made a breakthrough. Finally, you had found something that you were good at. Finally, you had been broken free from these intense burdens that had dragged you down. Had you given in to a universal temptation. You tried to regain your breath.

Were you totally isolated in your journey. Were those who sought to guide you back to the right path only causing you to deviate even more. Your own body seemed to turn against you. You could feel such pleasures welling inside you. But these waters were indeed churning, and in their cauldron you could feel the mix of a more severe condemnation. Temptation and punishment. What had you done—nothing—you had enjoyed life. And now you felt pursued by an inner death. Who, what had betrayed you. So that you might take even greater pleasure in a darker night.

You needed to recollect, to find the heart of your being. But in this flux, you were being introduced into such unfamiliar territory that the former points of reference seemed no longer to apply. If you could only be seized by some immense power, then you could let go of your hesitation. You could give in completely without any concern at to what might follow. Such was to be your dilemma. And in the winds that ravaged the landscapes of your soul, you swirled and tossed and turned and twisted.

–Now look at yourself. Look, my child, what you have become!

And you saw the horns. You saw the fierce beauty. Never were you so attracted to an image in your life.

–Come for me now. There is nothing that can be done to stop you.

Even though your vanity drew you deep into temptation, you hoped that your

sorrow might immunize against any actual shortcoming. Perhaps desire was part of your nature but you wanted to break its regime. Unless you attained the skill to completely rout this dominion, you would remain inclined toward sin. In this inclination, a curse seemed to descend over your being. And you wondered if you could somehow subdue its affects. Maybe if you devoted all your efforts to counter this decline you could eventually compensate for your errors in judgement.

–I never actually resolved my search in favor of wickedness. I have always tried to shore up my defenses against depravity. There was never any real danger of me being seduced by the flowers of evil.

But you were immersed in this netherworld. The panic became worse and worse. The possession took you over. Forgiveness followed you everywhere. You could not escape the knowledge that it implied. You were ever besieged by its obsession.

Your weakness only suggested a new form for the temptation. That your lover could nurture you and offer succor for your fallen state. You had sold your soul for a place at his table. You would be one of many who had gone down this same road. And the depths dragged you further and further down.

–There is no mercy here.

–Mercy is the price that you must pay. Nothing here is free.

And you saw the fortunes of your persecutors increase as you slid into a despair without words. Your body burned with a fire that raged with greater and greater intensity.

–I have made mistakes. But that is not who I am. I have a sainted nature and all that I require is the chance to win my way back. Give me the opportunity and I will again set myself on the right path.

–You think that you have more lives than a cat.

–But is that not the spirit of forgiveness. The limitless well.

–But if you assume that the well is limitless in and of itself, it will only overflow and drown you.

–I need true salvation.

–Then don't aspire so high.

You checked yourself in the mirror. Could you really give in to the rigors that he contemplated.

–Have I really fallen that hard? You told me not to despair.

–I am your adviser, and in this role I need to inform you how deeply you have fallen.

–You're just repeating back to me what I said earlier.

–But I'm doing it in the right order. You were just mouthing the words in the hope that you could reach paradise.

–And I won't.

–Not if you don't change your ways.

You could not wait for this hoped for deliverance. You had waited too long. You needed some immediate assurance. Was this not your darkest hour. Even sin seemed only a hollow reply to your dilemma.

–I don't want your help. I don't want anyone's help. I can do it on my own.

–That is the worst sin of pride.

–But it is my pride. And I'm very proud of it.

–Don't destroy the veil while it can still do you good.

–Don't destroy the good in life just to keep me in this veil. I want to fly.

–Just don't look down.

–Is that all the advice that you can give.

–You make me afraid.

You did not react.

–Child, you could have been saved but instead have turned your back on the only validity in your life. I have done what I can.

But I have not. In you was emerging a being that no longer sought integrity from the outside. You were still haunted by your fall, but you were no longer restrained by its effects.

All your life you had felt this city scurry by inside you. This was your fiefdom and you were enjoyed by your rule. For too long the city had been under a dark cloud. The storm was now dissipating. If you were to begin your journey, you had to make the step now.

–Let the city spread out. World, here I come!

And so you escaped.

You felt your world emerge from its darkness. The sun baked your skin brown. Your hair was golden in the sunshine. Your abdominal definition seemed to be the reward for the summer sweat of your exercise routine. Your muscles held taut to your frame. Each movement exuded your new confidence. The glare of the day hid your former preoccupation with the shadows.

Women surrounded his every step. His caress trailed from one to the other. Each tried to hold his attention where he seemed lost amidst this crowd.

What a haughty bastard!

–You want to dance?

–Do I know you?

–Your friend introduced us last week.

You were trying to brush him off. Polite.

–You're looking really great.

You knew what he wanted. He was attracted to your new look. The sharp lines etched by the sun.

You didn't want to look him in the eye. That would give him a sense of overconfidence.

–I've really got to go.

–I hardly talked to you. Maybe I could get your number.

–And do what. I don't think that we'd get along.

You dreaded getting lost in a trail of conquests. But you took his number.

When he first met you for dinner, he seemed to have lost that independent swagger. At times, he seemed shy. You loved his honesty.

–I used to draw and paint a lot. I always thought that I had talent. But I was afraid of what people might think. That I was wasting my time. Especially my Dad. He thought that anything that didn't make money was a waste of time.

–Do you still do this.

–I just doodle.

–Did you save any of your old stuff?

–Somewhere in a box in the apartment.

He convinced you to come over that night after dinner.

It became his mission to find the pictures. Over a bottle of wine, the two of you shared his reminiscing. And in his bold figures and soft lines, you felt your own hand guiding the charcoal on the page. Felt his caresses on your dark skin.

He pulled you toward him. He kissed you. It overwhelmed you. All too fast. If you gave in now, you'd have no resistance to brace yourself.

–I need to go now.

–It is getting late. I got to be up for work.

He wanted things to proceed faster. But his patience surprised you.

As you fell asleep, you felt his kiss sear passionately to the heart of your being. It both attracted you and reminded you of that strange darkness from where you had emerged.

His touch warded off those bad spirits of a former time. You could feel his body warm against yours. You slept restfully and awakened refreshed.

Part of you wished that he wouldn't call you again. If he would just go back to his other girls. Something seemed to remind you of something that you wanted to forget.

–Sorry, I haven't called you the past few days. Things have just got crazy at work.

You imagined him with some other girl. And maybe it could be you. You stretched out on your bed all self-assured. You could make him love you, have eyes for no one else.

The phone cord twisted around your body.

–I might be free tonight. But I've got some school work that I need to get done. An essay that's due next week.

But you don't do any work that night. He took you to dinner, dancing. And he moved so gracefully. And his knit shirt hugged his trim body. His muscles were solid underneath.

You're at his place when he gets a phone call from a girl.

–I need to go.

–I'm going to break up with her.

You wanted him to. But you hadn't yet had the courage to tell him not to see other women. After all he hadn't even slept with you. In fact, it was remarkable that he hasn't pressured you to have sex. In spite of this, you felt down deep this need to be with him, for him to be inside you. And the more that he seemed to deflect his attraction, the more you felt the pull of raw desire. It was as if he was poisoning you with some love potion that drove you crazy.

He kissed you on the way out. One of those stay-with-me-forever kisses. And you gripped his firm ass, move your hands along his pant leg.

You left aching for more. You wouldn't let him drive you home. You ended up taking up a cab.

You couldn't sleep that night. The light of your desire filled your bedroom. Exhausted, the dawn invited you to sleep.

His technique was flawless. He was making you want him. Holding the door for you or filling your room with flowers. His rapport with the waiters, the wine lists.

Dessert. You melted in the chocolate miracle. The minute swirls intoxicated you.

He pressed your hand down against the table.

Kiss me now.

You let the caramel surprise do the talking for you.

You had anticipated this sweetness all your life. The total domination by this feeling convinced that this was the perfect thing for you to do. Nothing had ever felt so right. You needed it to feel this right. He wanted you to convince yourself of as much

To another's eye he might have looked slight. But you noticed how his work out had given him a sculpted form. He became your Adonis. And you wanted his body to shape yours as you hide yourself in his sure lines. You craved the union of flesh on flesh.

Already you felt that he was cocky. So you tried to withhold your affection. Or to divide it into apportioned doses. Not to let on how fine he was becoming for you.

You could feel the seeds of destruction of your affection in each fragile embrace. Only his kiss awakened something unnameable in your passion. And you drank of that connection freely, a hemlock for your soul. And you knew how much you were becoming addicted to this elixir.

You wanted to expose yourself utterly naked to his desire. The more that he seemed to ignore you, treat you badly, the more you wanted to keep this going... Sometimes you just wished that he would go back to his other women.

She was never touched by a power so great. And she expressed her will towards it by her total assent. In this there was no holding back whatsoever—this is what made it so frightening.

She reviews how she sees herself. How everyone else sees her.

—They all want me. I don't know what it is but they can't help but want me.

She wanted them to treat her with reverence. So she let them bless her days with magic

—Look how they look at you.

All heads turned your way.

—That still is not enough. It is never enough.

—What do you want—worship?

—Down deep, I am still very unhappy.

She felt that everyone wanted her. Not who she really was but just how they expected her to be. And she wanted it that way.

—Something's wrong with me

—Your memories have created who you are. You have never really gratified your desires.

But this revelation risked turning her into a monster.

--My heart is breaking. I can feel them breaking into my dreams.

But her sleep was so restful.

—I want you to do something for me.

—I've been in this scene before.

—I want to see you naked

—Let me just take my top off.

—I'm not even touching you.

—When does the touching start?

—Kiss me.

There's no rescue in any of this.

I could feel myself slip into the passionate sighs. My world swirled around me, and I

felt myself sucked down. In this coincidence, I was together with him. I felt close to him—intoxicated by his breath.

—Give me your hand. What are you afraid of. This is your game.

There is no escape from this place. Suffocation in your anxiety already has you folded over in pain. You wish that a blast of fresh air might penetrate the dank and give you the strength to right yourself. But even your attempt buries you deeper in your pain.

This is too strong to suggest that you enjoy this. But the expectation of a lull is itself a delight.

He buried himself inside my flesh. And I surrendered in him. He eased over my initial sense of discomfort. Now this was the only that I could call living. Everything else reeked with the same burden of being.

His body made me shiver. I trembled when I touched him. But I became lost in that hollow. It was all too honest.

—I feel that I am dying when I am with you.

I trembled when I touched him. I hid in this layer of skin that seemed to surround him.

—He gradually expanded his hands to trace the muscles of my back. I needed him to stretch my skin, to touch me deeper. He slid the oil down my stomach. I opened up to his caress.

—Maybe you could teach me something.

—Surely.

I ask you to complete the picture.

The brushing of her hair--the brush of her hair. A honey blonde. I kissed her deep. I wanted to kiss her, to say something. She looked at me. I wanted to complete my gaze by devouring her body. She turned to me to smile.

Her friends stands the way of my view. I stare at the gentle curve of her ass. I am sucking on the full cheek.

—Please move while I continue to stare.

—I need your touch--more than that.

—We need to talk about how they feel

In the Charleston scene, there was fascination for such talk, beyond talk, the purity of the word itself. The women that they desired. The smoothly shaved legs. The silky dresses.

I feel myself lick along the boundary between her self and nothingness. And she dizzily negotiates this precipice. Her rhythmic breathing and deep sweat drenched kisses mark this fervor that keep her on this side of oblivion. More restless. More inspired.

There is a spring in this path. The firm skin, the moist infection. The feverish breath. Breath to breath in me, on my face.

Her hair is damp and clinging to her face. She smiles. I dissolve in her.

I move so slowly along her skin. We merge. Ah!

Later she turns to face me.

–You’ve made me understand something about myself that I never saw before.

What can I possibly do with such knowledge? I mean what would she have said if had told her that before we slept together. I can make you understand things about yourself that you’ve never seen before. And it frightened me how much I have been believing this sort of thing

I am shaping myself around what cannot talk. I am a mold formed around silence. What I had most wanted. And now it seemed just impenetrable to me.

I need to sleep or I’m going to go completely off the deep end. I am so happy! Drenched in my awareness. I am inside you and outside—watching from afar.

–Are you touching yourself? I need to see you. Put on a skirt and no panties. Everything in my outside is inside you. I need to be with you. I need you to wait in your car.

–All these guys see me as their fantasy. I want everyone to give me head right here right now.

–I am your fantasy now!

She lifts her shirt to show her stomach. She discusses his conquests to make him think that he is special. She just wants him inside.

She is succulent. To feast on her flesh!

You were lost in a vague feeling that you could take on his pain. In that you gave his cruelty much more validity. In fact his pain ended up being the disguise for his cruelty. But you felt that you needed to accept such discipline. Only then could you return what you had abandoned in those long nights with your former lover. Now your attachment was to a persecutor. This was a fate that you had so long contemplated in your dreams. Now this vision was driven deep into you. So it was something that you felt you needed. You acted so he could punish you. Relish his punishments, you did.

–What about me? My body.

–Your body. I have needs too.

–But my need are independent of yours. And they have to be met before I can ever give in to you.

–We’re in love. There is no independence. That is an illusion.

–But I am drowning in your love.

–But I die when I do not have your love. What can I do?

Is something going on here? Something that would preclude you giving your love to someone else.

–This really doesn’t involve you.

–Who does it involve.

–That is none of your business.

–But you told me that you loved me.

–Told you. And that doesn’t obligate me in any way. Love is not about obligation.

That’s your thing.

–Then you can do whatever you like.

–So can you.

I've lost the only person that I can confide in. I am definitely trapped. Why am I letting this go on?

He is so jealous. He suspects the wind. He hears a phone ring, he hears a knock on the door, he sees a man in the street—suspicion.

—I'm becoming more and more attached to you.

—But you told me that he threatened you.

—He said that he would do things to me if I left him. He had these screaming fits in public.

The stories go along with you assurances about yourself. You are so deep in this mess. But you find a new joy in these depths.

—He is giving me something that I never had before.

—I want you to suck my penis.

[I don't remember this scene.]

—I'm not feeling it right now.

—I want you to get me hard, and then I want to put myself inside of you.

You give in. You lose yourself so deeply in his penetration. There is no recovery.

I have to break up with him. There is no choice.

You found a REMEDY. It kept you up all night long—a solitary pleasure.

—Get on with it!

“No one that I've met has really satisfied me. This is more than SEX!”

I could predict like a science what would follow next.

Through me he acquired an intimacy that made him seem to understand He gave you the impression that you could maintain that intimacy. That's why you fell for him.

—That's why I've fallen for you.

—And?

*—You're taking total advantage of **your** position. I don't want any more complications. I don't want anyone angry at me.*

—I'm not trying to damage her reputation. Or devour her like a piece of meat.

—You're right. I need to stop this.

—I'm not saying that at all.

She wants to end it.

—You've got to let her know--it's gone on long enough

I'm going to write that book that I've been telling you about.

--That's funny because I've been making notes too.
--About my story.
--Yeah.
--Can you write it for me—write up your notes for me.

--You asked me to end it.
--Look how far we've come.
--But you said that you'd go farther. That you'd do it for me.
There is the suicide watch—all that night—then the silence. Utter silence. Then you take some pills and head for the mall.

You are in a mall. It is as if you are pursued by this monster—a gargoyle looking down from a balcony.

--That's bull shit!. He never had that dream. Of if he did, you had nothing to do with it.

In the dream, the boy kills the father. And you, the mother, decide to accept the blame. The burden is so great that it starts to tear you apart.

--I don't like that dream.
--The dream that you told me was much worse.
--I felt your hand pull me back.

I still want to be your friend. It is not what you think.

--It's still penetration.

--I never agreed to any of this.

--You still went along

I really need your help. You're the only one that can see what is going on.

--Why do you make me bear this burden?

--Am I a burden for you?

--You never do what I advise.

--I still need to hear your advice. It makes me feel assured.

[Away from your view I decided to rewrite your story:

He felt this incredible need to maintain appearances. For she had shone a light on this part of himself that had always been empty, an emptiness over which he neither lingered nor admitted. And if she was indeed right, then his appearances might eventually imply something real.

That the catastrophe might cause her to ask for something more than he had been prepared to give. But for her this was request was no more than he had already promised.

For him, what he had promised was much less than the immediacy of the feeling that surrounded her. What he felt when he was with her and what he associated with that feeling when he was not around her. For him, the promise that he made to her was therefore no more than that insurance to himself that his feelings for her were far greater than any promise could encompass.

For her, it was entirely the opposite. The promise implied the projection of feelings

on his part far greater than she has sensed in his affirmations of love to her. At the same time, the full expanse of this promise was far less than the richness of feeling that she had savored in the physical contact between them. For her the physical contact was evidence for the extravagances of her attachment to him.

The physical contact between them became this ever tenuous link between two forces that each pulled in the opposite direction. She could not be any less aware of the likelihood of this band breaking. Under these circumstances, she could wish for nothing less than a catastrophe which might test his promise. Nevertheless, she dreaded the onset of such a catastrophe.

Her dread invited a tendency which had so disgusted her in her youth. She stayed with him.

–It’s not up to you to question my motives.]

Henceforth, her experience changes.

–I don’t think I can keep doing this.

–Why?

–He’s going to find out.

–I thought that was your whole reason for doing any of this.

–Now it’s different. We really are together.

–Let me kiss your breasts. Run my tongue along your legs. Revive our fundamental passion.

–I don’t need this.

Or in the retelling, I take over his role.

–You’re not giving me a chance to leave.

–Where are you going to go?

–I have places.

–They’re all the same. You destroyed your last refuge when you came with me.

–I wished that I hadn’t.

–Wishing and doing end up being two entirely different things.

–Going somewhere.

–For a little trip.

–You have something that belongs to me.

You have something that I want.

–I do.

–I don’t think that I can protect you anymore.

–I don’t think that I can protect myself

--Maybe this was all an illusion that never existed. I met you at an orgy. Sure I wasn’t a participant. And you were only there reluctantly. But we both have more or less subscribed to

the same culture. Let's not try to keep our blinders on. For whatever that means. You're way beyond innocence. If you're enjoying what you're doing, that's one thing. And if you're not, you can keep on pretending that it will all work out.

I just don't know where it all gets messed up.

–You want someone who doesn't give in to your advances. But when they resist, you turn on the after burners.

–As long as we can both maintain the illusion that there's more that we can get out of this.

–So why don't you give in all the way. You have to test everyone. Keep them all on the line at once. It's time to just hang up.

–That's going way too far. Way too far indeed.

–If I lift my skirt up a bit, are you going to look?

–You know that I'm already looking. But none of this really works with me.

–If you just keep acting fast enough, none of this will catch up with you.

–If it does.

–I'd love if you'd just hold me closer.

–You both want it and don't want it—is it all the same for you.

–I feel that I'm getting closer to something.

–And the stronger that you feel, you think that you're on to something really powerful.

It's just you. It's the illusion of the one on top at an orgy.

–We've all thought about it.

–And you think by acting it out that you're going to finally make it happen.

–For the moment it all feels right.

–Once you show some guy your breasts, how do you draw the line?

–There's always a line. Always a point where he can reveal an ugly side of himself.

When you just want to tell him to leave.

–Or you don't want to exercise that prerogative. You just spread it for him then and there and you let him take a snack.

–I'm not like that.

–We're all like that. You're on a roll and tanked enough and you'll push that button. I know you all too well.

–So you do?

–I'm trying to be nice.

–I'm trying to stay in bounds.

–But a good fault now and then really gets the game going. It inspires all the players to jump up and declare victory.

–So we all should have when we've had the chance.

–You're pushing for an end game.

–As I always do when I'm in a room with an adult who has his clothes still on.

–Would you suck me off for old times sake?

–Would you stick a lemon in it for old times sake. You really are walking on a thin line.

–My whole life has been about cutting it with a razor. As yours has been as well—I can testify to that.

–And so it goes.

–I'm not here to tell your story. That was some other guy.

–What are you here to do?
–Give you a massage.
–You’ve been doing pretty well with your words.
–And I wouldn’t mind obliging with my fingers.
–We still haven’t figured out all the things that we can do with the words.
–Like attached.
–Like going with.
–Like gone in with.
–Like going down on.
–Is that something special?
–It’s either very important or nothing important at all.
–How can that be?
–When you give something important to someone you don’t care about, you have to make it mean nothing at all.
–So much for the good times.
–You can’t keep a good boy down.
–Amen, sister!

We sit staring at each other nervously. For most of our time together, we have been checking each other’s weaknesses. We have been pushing it so far along. We can’t fulfill our needs as that would only create new ones. We stay in this hell.

I have already recounted her history, and I feel that I have real insight into her future. I just don’t want her to break down here and now. I feel that I have a personal stake in her. Worse, I feel that I am gambling, and I want to shore up my risk.

You can rescue a lost soul for a night, but that does not make a night. And this night is starting to seem more and more like a loss.

Given the temptations that she has described, I detect no resistance on my part and little on hers.

A SCENE

–What kind of games do you like to play.
–Ones that I can’t remember in the morning.
–How do you do that?
–By pushing out so far that there is little to recognize in what happens.

Is this my cue to leave. Have I always been afraid of this sort of recognition.

She rests peacefully next to me. She hardly makes a sound. I hear nothing. No one even knew that she came here. No one even knows at all.

A RECOLLECTION

–I can’t take it any more. I can’t take you. I just don’t like living like this.
–This has nothing to do with me. We hardly know each other.

- You know everything about me.
- It's not that kind of knowledge.
- But the way that you looked at me. I have always been afraid of that look.
- Why?
- That is real desire.

I try to revive her. There is no waking her at this hour. The night has been too long in her. I open her eyes, but she does not awaken. She will not. She refuses. For now she has left her body, and she is not ready to return.

- How far do you want to take this?
- It depends on what you want to show me.
- On what you can take. How long you can hang on. How hard can you make it. How hard can you really hold.
- Enough to not let go.
- And if I resist. Will that add to the feeling?
- I don't know. Are you into that sort of thing?
- I've never felt it any other way. I don't want to let go until the sensation stops
- There is the danger. The end of it all. The shortness of breath.

Here's where it really gets tricky. Where the story changes.

This is the secret.

- How long do we have?
- If we change the focus. Make the concentration more desperate. Then she can't let go. No one can.

So my gaze becomes more extreme. I am piercing a veil. And I hold it in my hand. What I have been gazing at. It is like a dove taking flight in my hand. I am frightened by it independence, fearful that I might impede the flight.

This is the originality of our contact and where we hold together. She is fierce.

Without this gaze, there is a turning away

You know it just by looking at it. That is your in. Having the bloody touch. This story has been about having it. Finding it, getting it, and keeping it. I'd be a fool to act as if it wasn't there when it was.

So who are you? Where do you really fit in this whole story? If I found something, either you've got it too, or you're clueless. It just looks like you're in the know. When it's just another appearance. And the heart of the matter is totally out of your grasp.

Or that's where hand to hand meet heart to heart.

- Is there no hope of reviving you?
- I live on fresh blood?
- How fresh? How much?
- Enough to drain a life of its force.
- And what is their in return?
- Pleasure.

- That may not be enough to take you through the consequences.
- I'll take my chances.
- We all do!

If you are really concerned about this, you're going to follow this through. But the lack of resolution is the only thing that can make you hang on. It means that you do not have to surrender whoever is pulling the strings. Just as climax is achieved, you can pull back-- disappear.. The only real contact is then with the air.

If I see you like he sees you, then I have become him. That is your fondest dream so that you can begin this story again. Linking up with somebody who doesn't have a vision of how the world turns around.

Whatever I see, whatever I hear when you talk to me, your smile, all of it comes down to this one thing--this explosive quality. This It that I can hold in my hand. Or what just slips away and has always slipped away.

Hidden in your aspirations is this basic wish. Just to self-detonate in the moment. Face to face with that kind of excitement, nothing else comes close. Here you confront the confusions of self. Who is making this all spin around. And can you make it go again.