

I can hear the dramatic, heavy flapping of vulture wings above my head, their hungry and sharpened beaks ready to plunge. The sounds of church bells pealing wildly and without pattern or rhythm in the distance, or sometimes resonating from the very epicenter of my poisoned heart. I know my time here is on the verge of expiration. I know that my ill-fated and impulsive pursuit for some kind of feeling of heaven in the midst of my upturned life and ensuing turmoil has only led me to the hellish maw I am about to be swallowed up in. I know that at the end of all of this, my entire life will be a cosmic blip, an accidental momentary hiccup with no echo or reach further beyond. I know I'm done and barely have the capacity to think, let alone breathe. So with her in this still and falsely peaceful resting ground I will remain, awaiting the rain and waiting to drown. For a moment, though, the sickly night air tastes sweet on her breath, and the rest of the world falls away into meaninglessness. I welcome my surroundings starting to shift.

The sky is like a stretched canvas of dark sulfur and scintillating insects scurrying across the blackness. All the tombstones encircling us shed their moss and start to shine in an unearthly obsidian glow. Beyond any sense of my own control, my arms are outstretched, my flesh at its breaking point as its pulled as taut as possible against my trembling bones. There's a taste of stale blood rising up in my throat as her tongue interlocks with mine and suddenly I can sense a new Elysium being formed from her spit. My submission to it all is futile to fight against, it's all just begun. This is what I wanted, after all. This is what I called for, this is what I brought forth in order to feel something, *anything*, that challenged the unending agony and dejection and existential shame I was stricken with since my previous lover did what she has done to me.

Now her arms wrap around me, my fingers lost in her infinitely unspooling raven hair that seems to be spiraling into the shards of moonlight, tethered by the fading stars that spell out my glorious doom. The world is opening up all around us, the depths of my pitiful soul are being violently plumbed, vultures are descending one by one, graves liquify into the pale-green carrion mire spiraling at our feet, she slips her cracking

tongue deeper into my sorrow, her presence amongst the deconstructing scenery is like a necrotic IV drip numbing all my past failures and heartbreaks. A suicidal ideation bubbles to the surface of my whirling brain, I try desperately to merge my form with hers, an overwhelming urge to join her in the charnel dirt, to leave here forever as an entangled rotting mass, to eviscerate myself from consciousness and forget all the ones who have damned me to isolation, including my self, and never return to my old life again. I'm ready to purge this dream, bash my skull against the screaming gates of all my sordid and painful memories. Ready to find a home in these crumbling mausoleums, to have the dead stone eyes of broken angels be my final judgment, and my final sensations being entwined with her in this place of silent decay.

Momentarily, she pulls away from me. Her eyes escape into the curvature of the night horizon - blue/black and speckled with dead planets, the smile that stretches across her face is a glistening canvas painting out my loss of control. She takes one look at me, she's ready to take me down, allow me to sink with her. Closing in, her scent is of burning twigs and wet dirt, she effortlessly folds her fingers into my brain's wrinkles. How does she glide through all my mental fog with such ease? How does she even exist in front of me now? Moments ago, or perhaps much longer as time has entered a permanent phase of meaninglessness and absurdity, I was on the brink of violent suicide in service to the actions of my grand betrayer, my once lover turned radical tormentor, and now I'm in this undead paradise embracing my suffering with somebody new, somebody perfect, somebody burning through my desolation. She stops for a moment, centipedes and strange unidentifiable mollusk-like creatures crawling up her legs, and softly embraces me as the moon above expands and spreads a pale blue haze across the reach of the cemetery. In between infectious tears welling up and surging from the impossible caverns of her eyes, she whispers sweetly in my ears, nearly clogged with the sounds of church bells, *"Come to me, be with me, sink with me, die with me."*

And from her words that dripped through me and coated my once hollowed insides like sweet-smelling tar, our scenery began to fully collapse and bring forth a new nightmare landscape of

her making. Intentional or not, she was bringing me further down into the unplumbed depths of what lies beyond death. Perhaps all of this was merely a result of our carnal union, our slipstream of reanimated passion, my paradoxical surge of life in the desert lifelessness of my being. It didn't matter, I would happily embrace a brutal apocalypse if it meant I didn't have to be alone anymore. All of whatever dreams or nightmares may come are welcomed to my ailing mind - feeling anything at all outside of the betrayal and abandonment I was made to deal with would be far more preferred even if it spelled out my final and timely demise. So I sank myself into the oscillating, glittering voids that are her eyes and drank deep the lifetime of shared sorrow that was stitching us together.

Then, as she embraced me once more and plunged her maggot-strewn tongue into my inviting mouth, viscously kneading it and knotting with mine, I began to smell an overwhelming stench of burnt flesh and rust. Struggling to open my eyes and rip myself from this burning nirvana, these reanimated undead bodily desires, this restringing of all my nerves through the network of her interlocked mouth, the smell got overwhelmingly stronger as the sounds of rusted metal scrapping against itself created an unexplainably unpleasant symphony of audio pain. What was that incessant scrapping? Why did it only get louder as the smell of searing flesh became more disgustingly palpable in the fetid midnight air? Did it have anything to do with how the consecrated ground under us started to boil and shift so drastically? The intensity of all these sensations only became more profound and impossible to ignore as her affection towards me heightened. I clutched at her tattered black wardrobe with my trembling, twitching fingers as she spelled her unintelligible and unutterable name in my mouth. Suddenly, I can taste the burnt flesh smell which caused me to immediately recoil as it filled my throat with its pungent staleness. At that moment, I mustered the strength to pull the girl away from me - freezing dirt and chunks of worms left underneath my fingernails as she flitted from my grasp. A small patch of dead flesh fell from her and drifted slowly to the ground between us, of which I wanted to immediately take up and devour so she could forever exist as a part of me. But my shifting surroundings commanded all my

attention as my stomach fell into a bottomless pit, my eyes welling with stinging tears, and my mind crumbling into a fresh new cavernous abyss at the sights laid bare in front of me.

Her eye sockets were emptied, her nose an inverted chasm, flesh slipping off of what's little left of her bones, her dried tongue didn't move, her patchy purple lips failed to part as words escaped from the dust clogging her throat; "Feed on me." Hollowed cheeks in grayish-brown discolorization, a loosely swinging jaw, filaments of hair like frail cobwebs being obliterated by the shrieking wind. The world began to violently spin and great rusted cemetery gates with disembodied limbs entangled and gauged through the pointed arches rose out of the ground where my anonymous lover lay disintegrating in the transforming, waxing mud. My mind became a pulsating gash that spurted forth violent images of past betrayals and those once closest to me torching my sanity, leaving me unequivocally ready for death. All things I was here to try to forget, now my pain is being dug up and thrown back at me as malignant lumps of rotten flesh.

The gates continued to rise around me and stretched into the infinite reaches of the night sky that betrayed any sense of time passing as all signs of light, the moon, and the stars entered a state of unexplainable nonexistence. There was nothing to the infinite blackness of the sky aside from the rusted tapestry of the rising gates that crisscrossed the darkness. I then took notice of the cylindrical holes that reached inward into impossible depths and lined the rising gates. Out of these nonsense cavities stuck out what appeared to be frozen and deathly pale naked legs with stained and tattered mortuary sheets loosely covering them. They rose up too, along with the rusted gates, and as they got closer to the nothingness above I could swear that the legs started to twitch, toes clicking at the forced and unnatural reanimation of their bones. My brain was inundated with a nightmare orchestration of the clicking bones and scarping metal...and something else in the distance, getting ever so closer. A sort of stifled breath squeezed out of a compounding series of overlapping, differently-pitched screams and howls. It was behind me, in the impossible darkness just beyond the gates. I tried to fix my gaze on what remained of the

girl that was once wrapped up in my scarred arms to try to refocus my mind away from the madness enveloping me. But she was across from me, sinking into the dirt where a cavern opened up and the tombstones turned to twisted pieces of impossible geometry, glowing a pale-dark green and folding over like malformed teeth. She started to sink and become lost in that unexplainable necropolis revealing itself from beneath the cemetery ground, and one by one the vultures descended on her.

Unable to stare any further into the opening pit of horrid colors and otherworldly architecture, I turned to face the sound behind me and saw the beast awaiting to capture my attention. Something fleshy and shivering, its breath misting in the cool air even though I couldn't make out any mouth or any other discernible human features for that matter. It was nothing but an opaque, severely obscured otherness that made sounds as if it was mangling and maiming itself with reckless abandon and sickly gleeful passion. It remained at a fixed distance beyond the rising gates that still emitted their maddeningly scrapping and bone-cracking sounds, which mingled with the sounds of squelching fluids and animalistic groans from the unknown predator. Without any noticeable limbs or real discernible patterns of movement, its formlessness got closer and closer to me. And despite the impenetrable gates infinitely rising above me, I felt no protection whatsoever from this unknown beast. I knew the longer I remained fixed in this spot of upturned, shifting earth with my new love out of reach, a victim to the vultures and the undead city that carved itself from the open fuming pit of midnight fog, the more likely I would be made subject to the undulating monster beyond the gates.

As the sounds of its masticating and self-mutilating amplified, my brain cleaved open and images of my past relationship flooded my failing psyche. Her voice piped through my ears along with the already overwhelming sounds of monstrous decay, her scent replaced the atmosphere, and the look on her face the last time I saw her, the time she utterly eviscerated my already crumbling heart and sectioned me out of her life, stretched across the void-black sky. Please, anything, take me out of here.

Clutching my hands to my head, I started to rip at my hair and scream uncontrollably as tears streamed down my face. The monstrous entity was at the precipice of the gates and I couldn't dare turn my head to get a more unobstructed view of it. But its noises escalated to an unfathomable degree and, along with the images of my past love and her voice uttering her final damnation of our troubled relationship and severing my ill-fated dependence on her, created a maelstrom of the purest agony. In front of me was the swirling chaos of the undead city where my newfound love escaped from me and was being ravaged by the vultures and the pale-green mist, where tombstones and statues of crippled angels tore themselves from all logic and formed buildings of impossible designs that spiraled endlessly downward into unknown depths. Above me was the circle of enclosed rusted gates, with limbs clicking and swinging - their mortuary sheets flitting in the wind. And behind me was the mess of a monster who seemed incapable of stopping its audible display of radical self-harm. There was nowhere to go, my short-lived paradise has ended, my eternal curse is here to embrace.

I looked to the desecrated corpse that had my saliva in its rotting mouth, my teeth marks on what little flesh was left where her lips once were, my scent mingling in the emptied pockets that once housed her eyes, and threw myself at her - passing my troubled and ill-fated soul into her emptiness. Enfolding her, the last remaining strands on her bleached bone scalp escaping into my mouth, my arms cracking every bone and snapping her neck, I escape the monstrous mutilating entity and the visions of my infernal heartbreak as I wrap myself in totality around this beautiful, resplendent, perfect corpse. The cemetery ground swirls and disintegrates further, beckoning me into the unknown city below. One last kiss and I let her take me down.