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**Freedom**

Wasting, withering to a bony frame, my silence has insured my demise. Not more than a coherent fiber of disgust, less than a mild passion, my grievances with the current autocracy meander back to the safe corner of complacency.

My dad's response to all the analysts, brilliant spokes in the bent wheel of society, respected duty-bound workers who never complained was a singular belch. Intently locked in his overstuffed chair, downing a quantity of beer and chips that would have made an elephant sick this proud observer languished in ineptitude.

This man's man, boundless follower, fine father, and agreeable soul enjoyed every whiff of air streaming into his lungs. He rarely had a bad day, was always optimistic, never withdrawn - his capacity to see past adversity was superhuman.

But that was all before our multi-national controlled governments took the big leap to pure slavery. Not the kind that left you scraping bottom but instead inhabiting it.

Right this minute dad with his puffy right-hand is twisting a medium sized dog on a skewer. He's become quite skilled at scorching these rotten carcasses into crispy brown creations. Even though his rations are supplemented by a family allowance not being put to work for well over a year means that we often eat dead droppings instead of fresh carved horse. Costing our masters in time and money to have dead carcasses bagged they distribute each wormy mass to the optimal number of slaves. Therefore, a single petrified roasted stump of protein with the accompanying pungent odor has to be shared with over a hundred other of the less desirables - that equates to one slimy-brown strip apiece. For when you're retired to the Labor Surplus Camp you have to expect your suffering to be just a tad bit more acute.



Being far removed from the labor camp our walk over the rut covered muddy path takes us about three hours each way. Singing patriotic songs belonging to a hopeful spring day decades ago my dad always keeps us moving our legs over the scum like the preprogrammed robots we've become. His last walk will be any day now so why shouldn't he keep his spirits high. When you aren't allotted work and you're an old horse who can't make money for the masters they just take you to the Slab and clobber you with a mallet. The Slab's supposed to be real red from all the blood that's gushed onto its white surface. Maybe, I'll find out if I reach the ripe old age of thirty. Don't know how dad made it this long? Possibly, he just slumped into a routine - that's it after all he was always the grand acceptor of his fate. He must have passed that gene onto me because I don't think the Taskmaster's at our site ever thought I'd advance to Prime Slave material. No that wasn't it, what saved me was I discovered early on that getting to the work site worn-out was never a valid excuse to not work like a fiend. My first Taskmaster never the sentimental sort would just laugh when he saw my small seven-year-old legs trembling from the extreme exertion. I'll never forget that bright morning with its deep blue sky. It felt like a new horizon was opening up all these beautiful flowers had bloomed at daybreak. Being a child, I had this unique sensation, I was expecting the best even if I'd been plunged into the worst. Anyway, my eyes must have been bulging white with fear when I saw a girl not more than a year older than my five years being dragged to the edge of the Waste Pit screaming bloody murder. All my happy stirrings ceased when my ears registered the abrupt silence. A hammer was mercilessly slammed into her skull. I resolved never to again be deluded into believing our masters were human. From that point on I knew they were animals.





So now it's a lot easier to just let the sharp tearing claws of pain rip at my legs and have them morph into a throbbing numb clump of wood. For I never let my focus flicker from that sunny deep blue morning. Heading in a long winding string of drooping shoulders back to camp, in the black of night, this is how I survive - exist. They did come for dad, but at least it was a miserable day not a false day of hope. He left without a struggle. That was so like dad.

A guy I know from headquarters told me a story about a week ago. He's a smart guy so I'm inclined to believe him. I guess that's why he can sit behind a desk with shining steel encircling his ankles for hours on end with only a sore butt for his walk back to camp. This guy who comes down to the pit every so often to write some figures down said that the reason our elite masters were having us dredge a canal by hand instead of use machines was because human hands, thousands of hands could save billions on machine maintenance costs and fuel. In case you weren't paying attention these were elite business masters who'd calculated this huge savings not government masters - granted it is hard to differentiate between the two.

So now I knew why my upper torso merged with my lower to turn into this huge lump of pain - a higher profit, more bags of loot for our lords. That could also be why by days end after scraping my hands raw for eighteen hours with only a ten-minute break for gruel I'd feel like grabbing a large jagged rock on the ground and pounding my head to a pulp; some chose flying from the cliff. Problem was the three hours of sleep we got every night just wasn't enough time to recharge even your little toe. We were in a constant state of delirium - termed "death stare". A tap, tap, tap of gunfire can be heard in the distance near the base of the mountains. There's this wave of scarecrows hobbling towards us shouting a word I haven't heard for ages. Yes, that's it; my dad said it in his sleep every now and then. I think its FREEDOM.







### ***Pleasure Blue Escape***

The boat glided through the blue crystalline water pushing little foamy white wavelets passed the sides. A warm radiant sun rested gently on my exposed skin - peaceful relaxation mingled with my hectic past washing it away. Our perfect day was painted in a light blue with puffy white softly gliding clouds wedded to a mildly enticing ocean horizon. Time was ours to brew slowly to serve in a fragrant garden after an easy sigh that releases all the tight energy.



You looked simply luscious in your gleaming white bikini basking on the deck with your soft gleaming brown hair waving lazily upon the mild warm breeze. Little beads of perspiration twinkled on your lightly tanned skin beckoning for my hands. Your thoughts must have touched my wondering hungry eyes for you smiled passionately.

We were now only five nautical miles from the island; the journey was exciting and wickedly satisfying but the island was so close our emotions started to erupt spasmodically in a wet rhythm even before we set foot on paradise.

Life was freed from its cage of predictability our leap was more than a journey but a long-awaited fulfillment of joyful happiness. Leaving behind the cold hard ice of the north for the salty taste of ocean spray wafted along on pungently enticing air we rode each wave towards the island. With each wave we pushed up and down along the softly gliding path we'd chosen to explore.







Our feet made contact with a smooth saline liquid to rest in the snug moist sand that invited our presence. We brought our craft ashore to have it rest tightly between to firm palms. What a beautiful day, nothing could compare with this day of memories.

Yes, this second, minute, hour would be etched clearly in our future unhappiness - our anchor of fleeting unlimited pleasure. How very difficult to live on a rock of diamond hardness unyielding to the touch or uncalculated moment - this was more happiness than we could comprehend. We must keep it alive indefinitely, never to return to our armor-clad puritan robot lives.

Walking carelessly, we hugged the shoreline leaving footprints in the white pure crystals that were washed away by the incoming tide as we moved on towards the waterfront bungalow. Holding hands, we gently stepped upon each wooden step heading towards the door of the grass hut.



Windows looked out over the blue foam peaked blue merged horizon and in either direction down the palm lined beach. Off in the distance could be seen a pair of mountain peaks with protruding crowns resting solidly against a lush earth. Located between the sun glistening peaks was a deep blue lagoon faintly visible from our distant vantage point.

In the corner at the front of the hut was a box filled with wood from which we grabbed each long piece laying it in the outside cooking pit so that we might enjoy our fish brought from the boat. We roasted it lightly, hearing its faint crackling in the burning hole. When it was delicately brown, we ate greedily with each delirious bite rushing forth a burst of flavor. After dinner we laid in the open under a canopy of stars that beamed their greeting from far off in the heavens. Arms and legs resting upon each other we let the cool sweet air touch our bodies all night in our utter contentment.

Morning came with the call of gulls as a strong yellow presence emerged from its ocean depths. Such enchanting eyes met mine as we headed back down the beach toward the boat that would return us once more to civilization - or so those most esteemed truly believed.







### ***The Magnificent Human Bone Grinder***

The rattle coming from the bones in the back of the truck was disconcerting. There were too many, and they were piled higher than the standard three quarters full designated in the "Transport Document." They were stacked so high that every crater in the road hit by the thread bare tires meant fibulas, shinbones, and even cracked craniums went careening onto the surface. Granted, it was a job in a land where shackled employment was rare and death commonplace.



"Give me a land of freedom without chains to keep me in the yard of the powerful." This had been the cry of an earlier generation who'd halfheartedly endorsed change but refused to revolutionize or raze the institutions mired in corruption and gerrymandered political machinations.

Back then there was a government - actually, never really, just a shadow dictatorship driven by dysfunctional corporate megalomaniacs. These soon to be feudalistic lords circled the wagons and left all of us outside their walled palaces, to die a slow withering death, all in the name of feeding their insatiable desires.

Marches, speeches, promises from politicians with over stretched lobbyist feeding tubes, a myriad of compromises, and of course the simpletons whose comprehension of complex issues was limited to how much beer and chips remained in the cupboard & fridge - all this gush of discontent was easily washed away or crushed underfoot by the descendants of our business/government ultra-capitalist lords.





"Damn-it Frank, slow this wreck down or we'll lose all the bones on the road!" He was always racing to get these deliveries to the grinding mill so he could thrust his gnarled bony hand out for his extra LSB. Hell, my stomach would also growl more fiercely (than usual) in anticipation of this extra morsel, but losing most of our load on this 'moon' path wasn't worth the time saved if we were docked - then we'd only get half a dingy white brick.

But it did make your mouth water; this mix of finely ground bone powder with just a little drop of sweet corn syrup. Just watching these squares shoot out the other end of these huge conveyor belts was enough to make your lips pucker. The sign at the end of each belt proudly proclaimed "Labor Slave Brisket 1A - Food for The Eons."

It was kind of odd that the labor slaves in the CorpGov gulags died at the same rate that they must have been consuming their fellow workers who'd fallen with bones protruding, sores festering, and blue tongues wagging sometimes no more than a week before. But oh well, this was "just the way things were - no changing them" as Jerry the emaciated bone receiver at the mill was always quick to point out.





How could you complain; at least for Frank and I resting comfortably on our spring sprung white foam erupting truck seat life was a grand piano with an extra "Labor Slave Brisket" allotted for our efforts and plenty of Sterno for cheap highs. What else could a working stiff want in a world where streams coursed with toxic waste, temperatures regularly shot to 130 degrees Fahrenheit, and the only colorful grandeur was visible from afar in the castles of "The Rulers?"

Frank was a numb stump away, where I was just a dreamy intellectual who'd managed to stay alive, if you called this living; this mangled, rotten, puss filled ruin we'd allowed ourselves to be dumped into headfirst.

Screeching bellows howls, and gleeful belching sounds of a now mostly devoured generation still made its eerie shimmering presence felt at nightfall. Sleep hardly ever came when you had a prune sized stomach aching for something approximating food - not this white cannibalistic wastage that erupted 24-hours a day from a greed festering world.





Yes, mine was the Who-yaw generation; we were the ultimate spectators in a spectator society scrupulously adhering to the irrelevant sensationalism pandered by a corporate media machine. It had been an organism populated by media parrots spewing out mind melding mush that kept all of us sleepy minded sheep grazing happily.

"By the way, what did our lords eat?"

Just up ahead was the nexus of human wastage - the supreme bone-grinding factory rising what must have been four stories high and covering many square miles. It never ceased to amaze me, this technological marvel where all roads led; to this black hole sucking from all directions resting on a land left uninhabitable - utterly desolate.

We were a dying race. Our food being chunked out the end of this massive hunk of metal affixed to a barren world - a world greased to benefit our evil masters.

