



VEIL NANOSCIENCE INC.

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Project-77

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WARNING!

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LOGOS

(Trans. Note: The spacing here can be understood with better context. The full scan of the journal entry can be found on the following page.)

I will live through this through this I will live

What has already been done, has already begun

Thy room be done on earth as it is in heathen

I toiled wholeheartedly in the vineyards because it was fun, fun,
fun.

How do I know how to speak my mind if I'm brand spanking new? This is my first day. The first one I remember. I must have been taught somehow. To speak and to write that is. Perhaps, I was programmed. With language at least.

They've inputted me with very little else – about myself, who I am, where I am or how I got here. I do not question why I am here. I already know: I deserve to be here. In this room. This prison. (Marginalia: *purgatorium*)

Or at least the room deserves me. If only I knew what wrong it was I have committed. (Marginalia: *rape and pillage, let's storm the village*)

I must have existed before now, before day one. I'm fully grown.

And there's the other writing, the chicken scrawls, that came before this – over how many days – who knows. Those days are from before "me" though, so I will designate them as from day 0. (Marginalia: *"Ego Dominus, et non est amplius; extra me non est deus"*)

But I must have written them. All except LOGOS. I feel, somehow, that I did not write that. That Logos was there before. Had always been there before.

I like being only one day old. It has shed years off my skin.

But like most babes, all I ever do is sleep. And I'm already tired. Each word is a struggle.

At least, I presume it's day two. With no clocks or moons, I have no way of telling the time. So each time I wake up it is as if a new day has dawned, even if I have only slept 20 minutes. Although I could hardly tell how long I slept. I only remember opening my eyes and I didn't remember yesterday until I re-read it just now.

Who knows, maybe it is still really day one and I will never grow any older at this rate.

If I have no memories of the past behind me, and no future days in front, do I even be?

Am I already dead?

Nah, it's still day 2. See what I did there. (Besides, I was never much the being-ist).

Perhaps I should describe my predicament. I am in a room. That has so far been established. The room is yellow. I wish I could describe the yellow but it escapes me. It's so hard remembering things. Like my name. But that is different. I don't feel panic, sick and dread when I try to remember a color I once held in my hands and brushed on my chin when I was a child. (Right Marginalia: **lemon, butter, sun, sunny, puce – was puce ever yellow?**) (Left Marginalia: **was that a memory? or just a programmed association?**)

Oh, dear. I took half a page just to describe a color – perhaps it is better that I draw it.

(Trans. Note: Scan of drawing will be found on following page.)

It seems they have programmed me with the rudiments of perspective. And apparently, I can remember the word "rudiments" but I can't remember a simple shade of yellow. Fuck. (marginalia: **well, you didn't forget that word now, did ya?**)

The pens and journal were in the drawer of the desk. Logos was already in it, so I presume the journal belongs to him. Maybe they will take me away too, and Logos will return and find his book with all my scrawlings in it. I hope he, or rather you, don't mind.

The glass was full when I woke up so I guess that makes me an optimist by default. I don't know who filled the glass. Since there is no little's girl room either, I can't tell you what happens to the water afterwards. I don't eat either. I feel no hunger but my left wrist is bruised and has small pin pricks along the vein.

I'll spare you the color of the bed and the floor.

The two sets of long skinny lights are both on when I wake up.

The ceiling recedes to a flat grey ocean. It's the wrong word but something prevents me from remembering it (the same monster that prevents me from remembering my name).

Just now I thought I saw the shadow of the leviathan floating above me in it.

I can't tell you what I look like as I can't see my face. I'm slender with fine bones and pale skin. No idea my height as it's all relative. The bed fits me. I fit it. As I said: I belong here.

I can't tell you the color of my hair. I have none.

Not down there either.

Add "Brazilian" to the top of the list for clues to my identity.

Dear Logos,

Today I tried to discover all I could about the room. I'm never leaving so we might as well become acquainted.

- 1) Tore the sheets off the bed. No identifying tags.
- 2) Pulled off the mattress. No tags: criminal. I assume that's why they got rid of Logos. Haha. Get it? (They did not program me with a sense of humor either).
- 3) I crawled under the bed and examined every bar, spring and rivet. I'll save describing them for when I get really bored (which I imagine I will).
- 4) Discovered that the desk is bolted to the wall.
- 5) I ran my fingers along the whole crevice where the floor meets the wall and found nothing.
- 6) Stood on the desk and bed but couldn't reach the lights. Maybe I'm shorter than I think. Or the room is taller.
- 7) I'm wearing a white jumpsuit and nothing else. No zipper or buttons. Only Velcro. I took the jumpsuit off and examined it closely. Nothing unusual.
- 8) Then I looked underneath the door to the outside. It seems to lead to a hallway, but I can't be certain as the door fits too close to the floor. I watched for a long time but never saw a single sole.

Dear Logos,

I decided to spend the day examining every square inch of the floor until the pattern made me nauseous. I then ran my hands along every square inch of the walls.

Why bother giving me language and little else?

I don't even have a face.

Dear Logos,

I finished the floor. There are night visits, but I prefer to forget them – which is saying a lot for an amnesiac.

Dear Logos,

The Earth was six days old when God created man. I feel epic. Only they didn't make me. They have unmade me. Deleted me. I have no name, no memory. So I will just sign my true name now.

Signed,

[Deleted]

Dear Logos,

Does 7 days a week make?

[Deleted]

Dear Logos,

Decided to go over everything again in case I missed something. Found a small drawing of a crown on a bar below the bed. It was very hard to find as I imagine it was meant to be.

(Trans. Note: Full scan of drawing can be found on the following page)

Is it a message from Logos? What could it mean?

[Deleted]

Dear Logos,

I discovered something. On my person of all places (Marginalia: **Interesting turn of phrase**). I was rubbing my skull absent-mindedly and realized I had been rubbing a small scar the size of the hole of a straw. On further investigation, I found several more (on my skull) altogether.

Five, one behind my year. (Margenalia: **Freudian slip**).

Who's to know what further explorations of my body will yield.

[Deleted]

Dear Logos,

The bed has been replaced. Your crown message is gone.

Or am I mad?

Who knows maybe they replaced the desk too or the room itself.

Or maybe they have replaced me.

And who changes my sheets? Bathes me? Fills the glass with water every night? (Margenalia: **Fill! That's who!**)

[Deleted]

I've been trying to piece together what happened during day 0. But I only have what I wrote down here and little of that makes sense. I am also starting to have strange rememberings from that day. Mainly a sense of topsy-turviness. Like I'm on a boat and the whole room risks being tossed and pitched into the sea. I must have been drugged. Sometimes there are hands attached to husky tattooed arms around me, guiding or pressing me down. But mostly I see only colors.

Even going over the lucid things (and I use the term lightly) I have written since, I get the sense I have not been quite right. In fact, I come across as a little loopy. Who acts so nonchalant when being confined to a room? I'm in a FUCKING rubber room for gawd sake and I've been stuck here for days with not a single soul in sight.

And what was I talking about: night visits?

The clearer my head gets, the more maddening this is. I almost would prefer to be loopy again. I can't shake this feeling of having a large black rat gnawing away me from the inside out.

I'd ask what I'd did to deserves this but I already know: I've done the single worst thing possible or I wouldn't be imprisoned in this place.

I would crawl in a hole and die of shame for whatever it was I have committed, but I'm already here.

[Deleted]

(Trans. Note: A full scan of this entry can be found on the following page.)

(Marginalia: (Image of paperclip) ← WTF IS THIS???)

Is someone playing games with me? Logos?

Maybe it was Fill? What possible reasons would Fill want to mindfuck me? I drink his water, don't I?

Maybe I should be grateful for the gift. It's kept my mind occupied for hours. A double check of the room. No paperclip in site.

Maybe it's a drawing.

(Drawings of many paperclips) ← No, that's a staple.

[Deleted]

(Marginalia: (Another traced paperclip on the page))

Another one. Identical to the last. It has to be Fill.

Today I accidentally knocked Fill's glass onto the floor.

It was fine. I ignored it since I don't have a towel to wipe it up. Maybe Fill will mop it up while I sleep, along with all the other things he is apt to do.

I don't really want to think about the things he is apt to do to me in my sleep.

After a while, my throat began to feel as if it was on fire. I began to whimper. And then just now, I couldn't take it anymore so I started to slurp the water off the floor, I'm ashamed to admit.

Suddenly, I am very tired.

[Deleted]

I've decided to catch Fill in the act. Since he must read Logos, he must now know I have a plan. But I have to write it here, otherwise I'll forget. It's strange. Every time, I wake up, it's like I am a blank sheet, and I have to relearn everything all over again. Not, like a fresh sheet, or completely erased. More like...like the memory in my brain is written in invisible ink, and I have to run an iron over it for a few passes until the letters are discernible again.

I mean only for memories created since day one, of course. I still don't remember anything before that.

I have to find a way to remind myself without Fill being able to figure it all out.

[Deleted]

Yesterday, I stayed up as long as I could stand it. Just for show. I had put Logos under my mattress. If Fill did paperclip it, I would know. I stayed with my eyes closed for as long as I could. When I woke up Logos was back open on the desk. I bet you Fill even read it.

[Deleted]

LOG OS:

I wake up.

I don't remember anything.

I read Logos and my mind refreshes.

I write.

I thirst.

I drink water.

I crawl into bed and count the seconds.

At around "300 Mississippi" the lights go out.

I sleep.

[Deleted]

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[Deleted]

The pattern was so obvious. I only had to wield it.

LOG OS:

I wake up.

I don't remember much.

I read Logos and am reminded.

I don't write.

I thirst.

I swig the water but hold it in my mouth.

I crawl into bed and lay face down in my pillow. Just long enough to expel. I roll over, my shiny bald head sopped into the crush of wet feathers sheathed inside a cotton case.

I close my eyes.

I count and breathe slowly.

298 Mississippi

299 Mississippi

300 Mississippi

301 Mississippi – the lights flick off

697 Mississippi

698 Mississippi

699 Mississippi – the door clicks

I suppress a twitch. I hear the jingling of keys and a set of footprints walk in as the light flicks on again. A man's grisly voice slurs with a swampland twang: "How now, brown cow?"

I wait for someone to respond to the speaker. But then I realize: he must be addressing me. It's Fill and I can't risk opening my eyes to see what he looks like.

Fill's footprints stop at the head of the bed, and unseen hands fiddle with what must be a lock mechanism for soon the bed pulls away from the wall.

The bed lurches, and swings and I am gliding. A cold breeze

rushes in on the stagnate room as Fill sings a tune I'm unfamiliar with. "Let me tell you the story 'bout Minnie the Moocher..."

Lights float over me as I try not to stir. Electric currents course through my body. I'm certain Fill will notice the goose bumps on my arms as we swing round a corner and my flesh begins to crawl.

The rat runs wild in my stomach like it's being chased towards a trap with poisoned cheese.

Fill must notice something is up. He slows down my carriage and bears down on me. I can make out his shadow through my lids, his head hinged to mine, and I suppress the instinct to pinch my eyes shut.

"What are you up to?" he asks with a voice greased with the sound of motorcaws.

989 Mississippi

990 Mississippi

He stares down at me for a moment, but then jingles the keys again.

My heart starts to thump. I hear the turning of the handle. What am I so afraid of? And how can I be afraid of something I don't even remember what it is?

At the head of my bed again, I feel Fill over me. He grips either side of my pillow. The dry edges, I pray.

998 Mississippi

I can smell the man of him now. Somehow, I know it is a smell I have bathed in in the past.

999 Mississippi

Fill presses down over me. His lips and jaw sandpaper my face, sweep over my lips and then kiss each of my fluttering eyelids. I grip the sides of my bed to keep myself from punching him in the jaw.

I can't believe he doesn't hear the pounding of my heart, see it beating violently against my chest. But it's not Fill I'm afraid of. I'm numb to his attention. It's the door that scares me. Or, rather, the total blackness behind it.

Then his lips are at my ear: "Remember, they can't break you. You

are indestructible. You will live through this. You just gotta live through it."

Then he pushes the foot of the bed against the door.

"Go get 'em tiger," he says as he begins to wheel me in. I can feel the rat dig his heels into the walls of my stomach, and scramble up my esophagus, clawing its way through my throat and out my teeth.

I scream. A rat's cry. But the scream never ends as I bolt up in bed and start clawing at my skin.

Slam! — Fill has rammed my shoulder back against the bed. I open my eyes as Fill is strapping my wrists down with his tattooed arms. I look up at his calico-colored spiky head as I continue to scream. His pug nose flares under intense green saucer eyes. Silver piercings in his chin, nose and ears glint under the fluorescent lights as his mouth is drawn in a firm line. He draws over to the foot of the bed to grab a hold of a wild free leg but not before I manage to kick him in the teeth.

How I hear the footsteps running over my scream, I will never know. Fill draws down his ruddy pasty face down to mine with bleeding gums and whimpers, "What have you got yourself into now, baby doll?"

More men in white jumpsuits appear. They help Fill strap my legs down. It takes four of them to do it, which makes me glad.

"How the hell did this happen?" a reedy man's voice crisply inquires. I look up, and "Doctor Darling" appears, according to the pin on his white lab coat. The Doc is a thin white man with a fringe of grey hair around his skull and narrow features. He reminds me of an icicle.

"She didn't drink her meds," Fill huffs. Fill's arms and hands wrap around my head, neck and torso and pin me down. The blood from his mouth drips all around me. A single drop falls onto the breast of my snow white jumpsuit and spreads outward.

"I saw her myself, don't be stupid," the Doc hisses as he pricks me with a stinging needle.

Fill lets me go to thrust the wet pillow into Darling's hands the way a proud father would who shows off his kid's latest drawing.

I feel my muscles relax against my will as Darling says, "Hmm. Well, no doubt she would have forgotten all about this escapade by tomorrow."

But he is wrong, I do remember. Perhaps, it is vivid because the

memory is so violent. Or perhaps missing that one glass interrupts whatever it is they are doing to me. Or perhaps it is because I was full of fear.

"Now," Doc Darling says impatiently, "Shall we get started?"

Fill reluctantly wipes blood from his mouth onto his uniform.

He is at the head of my bed, wheeling me in but now his hands tremble.

My eyes look up at him and plead, but he refuses to greet them. Soon my voice stops working and the screams can only rattle around inside the cage of my head before the blackness overtakes me. The last thing I remember is Fill's finger pinching my earlobe as if to give me a burst of courage.

My throat is on fire now and I will drink. And then I will sleep. Like a good little girl.

I don't want to be conscious for whatever it is they do to me in that room.

[Deleted]

Rereading Logos over, I can't remember Fill's face from the description. I wish I did so I can recognize him again if - that's not it.

I can't quite make him out. Yesterday, I seemed to have decided he's just a perv. But now I wonder: why did he show such concern? Does he know me? Maybe if I remembered his face from yesterday, I can remember him from before. And then other memories might follow.

But I don't know him. How could I? I'm only 22 days old.

[Deleted]

Today the water is gone. It has been replaced by an apple. Do they think I'm stupid?

But I am hungry.

[Deleted]

I had a dream last night. The first dream since day one. Or the first I've bothered to write down.

In the dream, I feel myself step inside the body of a young man. Invading him. Only he remains in control; I'm just an impotent parasitic twin. We are walking through what appears to be a large campus, winding our way through the maze of old stoic buildings intermingled with modernist architecture.

We walk through a series of glass doors and I notice my broad thick features. Around the bridge of the nose and the forehead and eyes, my host carries a bit of a Neanderthal look about him at odds with the crisp buzz cut and horn-rimmed glasses he wears. Both the cuffs on our jeans are rolled up, and I carry a set of books under my right arm: A Compendium of English Literature, Metaphysical Poets, and a plain Moleskine notebook. I pass a gaggle of girls in skirts and bobby-socks who all giggle at me, and I can feel my eyes rolling at them.

I walk up a flight of institutional stairs, and enter a set of double doors. Then I realize, I'm now in the ward of a hospital.

I walk into a room with a few desks and chairs, with others – all students – seated at them. A professor-looking type acknowledges my presence and nods.

I sit down at a desk and open up the Moleskine notebook and ready my pen. The professor takes his time walking towards me, and I tap my foot impatiently. I'm eager for his arrival, taste his every footstep on my tongue.

Finally, he makes his way towards me. He takes a tissue paper out of his breast pocket, unfolds it, and hands me a tiny square of paper. "Just write what you see, feel and experience as per usual," he says as I pop the square of paper onto my tongue.

I poise my pen to paper and realize how much this journal looks familiar to me. It is the same as Logos. I wish to flip it back to the first page to check, but remember that I can't will the person I'm inside of into action: I'm just a long for the ride.

Another night of strange dreaming. Dreaming is not even the right word. Inhabiting? The dream was wrong. I mean bad, yes, but also wrong somehow. Too vivid. Too strong. Too in the flesh. I'm still shaken.

I dreamt I was in a man's body—a different man's now, only his body feels to me the way I imagine a large cat with stripes would. Strong. Aloof. Confident. Dangerous. Inside of this man, I feel a strange hunger I can't explain. I feel as if I'm bigger and larger than anything the world can contain and that I could swallow the Earth, if I wanted. And I want. All of it. At the same time, I still feel too big for my own skin, which is strange because I am a large man, with tanned red skin and blond woolly arms.

The cerulean blue sky smacks the red dusty earth all around me. A few brambles and cacti are the only features that dot the landscape. On a dirt road, I prowl towards an old aqua colored car that has flipped on its neck, with smoke rising from its mouth. By old I mean, not old as in decayed — it looks brand new — but old as in....not of this time. From when cars were big and had shiny bobs and metal trim on them. Though who is to say what time I am in now, in this room, anyways? Perhaps I am in the past and writing the future as I speak.

At the passenger side, I crouch down and look in. A crumpled skirt with a daisy print appears to me as if on the tumble-dry cycle. I reach in and pull out the life-sized ragdoll that wears it. I lay her flat as she moans. Her head is bleeding, soaking her tawny brown hair, and onto her skin the color of coffee with cream. My mouth waters as for some reason I think she must taste sweet and laugh at the thought in my baritone voice.

My laugh, his laugh, startles her and she looks up with almond-shaped honey brown eyes. But they widen with terror upon recognizing me. She begins to fight and scratch and scream with everything inside of her. But I pin her inner thighs with my knees and hike up her skirt with my calloused hands. A power I've never felt before rushes to my groin.

Inside the car, I can see a man with thick black hair, still strapped in his seat upside down. His head lolls back and forth as he coughs from the smoke.

I don't know how I managed to pull the loose necktie off round my neck while she fights, but there it is, round hers now. She stops fighting and gives up, powerless to stop me.

But as long as I am still inside the man, I fight with all my might to stop his actions: my actions. I rail inside this beast

like he's my cage. But he is too powerful. Too in command of his own body to allow me to seize it and take control. If only I could take command of him, I can save her. Or at least stop.

But it was only a dream, so it's not like I really did anything wrong, right? (marginalia: or maybe he's the reason I am here)

[Deleted]

I feel expanded somehow. As if, ever since the dreams, I've downloaded both the student's and the killer's language libraries. Words are coming more easily now, and I'm remembering so many more of them. Today, I am too enamored by words to bother writing last night's dream down.

I've written a message to Fill on my wrists where the pinpricks are.

A single word: "don't". Sometimes the simple words are all the ones you need.

I wonder if he'll read it.

[Deleted]

He did. But did it anyway. The message has been scrubbed clean.
The pinpricks: fresh.

Maybe they fired Fill. After everything I wrote in Logos.
Perhaps, I shouldn't have wrote it. (Marginalia: Loose lips sink
ships).

That's assuming that the type of organization that is holding me
is the type to worry about ethical procedures.

Or maybe, he's the only one who reads it and every night reports
to them what I wrote with his own sanitized version.

I'll never see him again even if they haven't fired him. We are
like the sun and moon now. (Marginalia: like Cupid and Psyche).

[Deleted]

I woke up to the sound of Fill singing in a low gravelly voice, "I've got a lot, a lot of what I've got, and what I've got's all mine."

I opened my eyes and found Fill sitting at the foot of my bed, swinging his legs. "And I assure you, I can cure you, if you're feeling blue—"

He stopped crooning on noticing I'm awake. A broad smile, "Morning, sunshine."

"Morning," I replied and sit up. "What was that song you were just singing?"

Fill waved his hand, "Oh, that's an old burlesque song."

"What's a burlesque?" I asked.

Fill roared with laughter at this and shook his head, "Boy, have they ever done a number on you." He continued to stare at me with an odd smile that stretched from ear to ear. I didn't like it. Nor the way he grunted, "Look at you, as innocent as Mary," and laughed again.

I felt heat rise to my cheeks. "Why are you here?" I demanded. At the moment, I didn't recall much of anything other than I deserve to be here. That burden of shame and guilt never lifts off from me no matter how little I recall.

"Lord, what a question." He pursed his lips. For a moment I think he's going to say something but then he stops. Finally, "At the moment, I'm to escort you to see Darling." The way Fill said Darling is Dar Ling.

He rose. And then saw the fear in my eyes. His face washed with genuine concern. "Hey, relax," he said, "We're not going to the Sleep Room."

'The Sleep Room?' I wondered at the name but could feel myself calm down from his reassurance.

I hesitated, but then rose out of bed. Fill went to take my arm in his.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

"Walking you to the Doc," he laughed.

"I can walk by myself."

He looked at me steadily with his green saucer eyes and said in a soft voice, "I know." And then, "Look, if you try to run, well, I want you to know that the other night, I was being easy on you."

"What other night?" I asked because at the time I didn't remember, not having read Logos yet to remind me.

"Right," he said. He opened the door and warned, "Stay by my side."

We walked into the hall. It was bare. White walls with peeling paint. Cold hard grey floor. Burnt out fluorescent lights. Exposed dripping pipes. A loud industrial hum. The smell of urine.

We walked for a moment, and then swung around a corner. I froze in my tracks. The rat within me woke up with a startle, and started to gnaw. "It's okay," Fill whispered, "Trust me." The rat waited, twitching its tail.

I somehow found myself willing my legs forward. Ahead was a door on the left side of the hall. My body shifted toward the wall opposite and I pressed my back into it. Fill pushed me forward gently, humming a melody I'm familiar with. As we neared the door, he sang the words softly, "She'll be coming 'round the mountain when she' comes...She'll be coming 'round the mountain when she comes..."

For some strange reason, the song soothed me. It bugs me that it soothed me. It bugged me more that he knows it soothed me.

"Just a little farther," he assured me. Soon we were clear of the door, and the rat settled down in the pit of my stomach.

"You should be proud of yourself," Fill patted my shoulders.

"What do you mean?" I asked, not sure why I should care what he thinks of me.

He stopped and looked me in the eye. "You're really strong is all."

I didn't know how. I didn't feel strong. We started walking, and he brought me to a door with the name, "Dr. Dar Ling," on it.

Dar Ling's compact office was surrounded by book cases and file cabinets. The icicle man himself sat at a modest desk with Logos opened in front of him. Fill gestured for me to sit in a chair and watched as I sat down.

Dar Ling looked up at Fill and waited. Fill hesitated and then left, closing the door.

"And how is our patient doing?" he asked in my direction. It took me a moment to realize he's talking to me.

I raised an eyebrow at him. He took that as an answer. "Do you know why you are here?" he prodded.

"Yes," I said.

He nodded for me to continue and so I did. "I'm being punished."

"How so?"

"Isn't it obvious?" I ask.

The Doc smiled a thin smile. "And why do you assume that are you being punished?"

"Because I've done something bad. The worst thing possible."

"And how do you know that?" he inquired.

"Otherwise I wouldn't be here." I answered.

He jotted something down in his notebook. Then he looked at me sternly. "I've noticed you've started dreaming again. Do you care to share?"

I shrugged, "Not in particular."

"Hmm, it's important that you do. Did you dream last night?"

"Yes."

"What of?"

"Falling mostly."

"Falling?"

"Yes, I was falling out a window from a high story in a building. I just kept dreaming it over and over."

The doctor made a note of this. "Anything else?"

"Yes, I was a man. And it was morning."

The doctor nodded and wrote some more. "I'm going to ask you a series of questions. Please answer them honestly."

"Well," I quipped with a hint of resentment in my voice, "Since you've said, please."

Dar Ling looked at me for a moment and then started. The questions soon tire me. Had I been seeing things. Hearing things that weren't there. Felt I had unusual powers.

Maybe I'm in a psych ward, which probably means I'm crazy. But I don't feel crazy, although we probably all say that.

Finally, he handed me Logos, encouraging me once again to write in it and then had Fill escort me back. This time, I held onto Fill's arm as we passed the Sleep Room.

[Deleted]

Last night I dreamt about the dead girl. The one I, or rather *he*, killed.

I was sitting on a beaten red vinyl stool in front of a window at a diner that gleams of chrome and polished Formica. My feet are sore from standing too much, so I rub them. Finally, I force myself into the stiff heels that pinch my toes, and look up. The dead girl stares at me with her almond shaped eyes. Her bee-stung mouth opens into a wide gap-toothed yawn as so does mine and I realize that I am looking at my own reflection in the window. I am her. Or rather, I am wearing her coffee cream colored body like my own skin.

A figure of a man slams against the window that I am staring at. The dead girl whose body I am wearing doesn't flinch, but I do, inside of her. As does the smattering of fatigued and well-worn patrons inside the diner. Outside, the man staggers away but then is slammed back into the pane by some outside force.

A waitress in a pink uniform and a bee hive sucks in her teeth. "He's got Billy," she says.

"Who does?" the dead girl asks.

"Some new thug that's been hanging around. Name is Hunter or so I hear."

The pounding of the man's body against the window continues and both the waitress and the dead girl look back at a man behind the counter who wears a hat that looks like a tiny white tent. He shakes a spatula at us and shrugs, "Don't look at me."

The dead girl stiffens and rises. I stride out inside her. The tight bodice of her black dress snaps my spine back at a-ten-hut. Looking down, it appears to be armed and loaded with two pointy torpedoes at the chest. The dead girl's body is stouter, curvier than mine, and she walks with a sway in her hips and a bounce in her heels.

The dead girl that I walk inside of walks out the diner and rears around the dark corner where the thug named Hunter now has Billy against a brick wall. With tanned red and blonde woolly arms, Hunter is slapping Billy in the face, and I feel a chill.

I desperately want to rear up, crawl out of this skin and hide from this man I know to be her future killer but this women's legs keep marching determinedly toward him.

"Do you mind? You're bloodying up a perfectly good corner he-year!" she spits. Her voice sounds the way mine would if I

pinched my nose closed while I spoke.

Hunter takes one look at her with heavy-lidded eyes and shakes his wavy blond hair. In a baritone voice, he replies, "Well of all the ballsy broads. What's it to you?" He slaps Billy in the face again.

The dead girl plants her heels on the ground and arches her back, "I'm just a concerned citizen, is all."

"Oh, you are, are you? What's your name?" Hunter stops hitting Billy, and leans his arm against the brick wall over Billy's head.

The dead girl drawls, "Sugar." I don't understand why she purrs at him. My instinct is to hiss.

Billy starts to slide away from Hunter, his back still against the brick wall. Hunter grabs hold of Billy's collar and continues to stare at Sugar. His eyes are piercing ice blue.

He half closes his eyelids and barks, "What kind of name is Sugar?"

Sugar juts out her chin, "My old man always said I was sugar and spice and everything nice."

Hunter regards Sugar for a moment. He then loosens his grip from Billy and turns toward her. As he does so, he wipes the backs of his bloody hands on the front of his shirt. The way a butcher would.

"Turn around," he commands. I don't understand what he means, but Sugar does. She spins slowly, curving her back and pushing out her chest. When she faces Hunter again, I can see Billy has slinked away and is almost round the corner.

Hunter smiles broadly. "Well, Miss Everything Nice. I don't see your name on it."

"On what?"

"The corner."

"Don't be so smawt," she coos, and taps his shoulder with her hand. "Besides, time is money...If you get my drift." She takes a step closer.

Hunter grabs a hold of the hand that taps his shoulder. His hand feels like an iron brand to me. He stares and then asks, "Who you work for?"

She stops tapping, alarmed. "Who you work for?"

"Good ole' Uncle Sam," he grins widely.

At this, Sugar seems upset and tries to pull away but Hunter holds on. I wonder why she is suddenly alarmed. Was this Uncle Sam mean to her in the past?

"Listen, I'm just trying to make an honest living here is all..." she says to which Hunter laughs, "I wouldn't want to deprive a lady of her livelihood." He smothers her hand in his, then plays with the fingers, lightly. "How 'bout you work for me. I promise the pay is grand and the perks are..."

Sugar throws her head back and laughs, "Yeah, right. Uncle Sam be my pimp..."

Hunter roars at this as if it is the funniest thing he has ever heard. "Oh, you and me, we'll get along fine," he grins with sharp angular teeth, "Just fine."

It's bad enough I have to inhabit the killer. Why must I laugh with him, stand so close to him, wrap my hands in his knowing who he is and what he will do to me, well...her, in the future.

Or is it past?

[Deleted]

Perhaps they have sterilized me.

Or worse.

I feel impregnated with enough other bodies as it is. Four by my count. So far. The student, Hunter and Sugar. And the man falling out the window. I don't know how they all relate to each other. Except Hunter and Sugar.

And Hunter kills Sugar at some point. Are these dreams? Or memories?

And if they are memories, why do I have them?

Why don't I have my own?

Maybe this is part of the punishment. To be infected with these people. I invade them and they invade me. And I need to be like a blank sheet for them to write their memories on, crisply.

Or perhaps, I'm supposed to carry their sins away. (Marginalia: Azazel)

[Deleted]

Another day. Another dream. This host feels different to me than the others when I wear it. Heavier. Pulled down by gravity and...weightier forces.

The body I'm wearing feels liquefied, face down and stinging the concrete. I gurgle into a pool of my own blood, which floods away from me, spreading outward on the sidewalk. I hear the din of confused and anxious voices around me and a faint siren wailing from afar. A voice above me says, "Not much I can do for him now." I try to mumble to the voice but both my tongue and jaw feel thick and slurpy. Everything is dim, although I know it should be light, and then the world is soon washed away by my tears of blood.

I have a hard time shaking these dreams when I wake up. It's like they are with me now, infecting me until I write them down and get them out of my system.

It's more than that. I can't shake the feel of their bodies, not only their particular way of moving but also how it feels to be inside their skins. Right now my legs feel broken and jelly and will probably feel like this for quite some time to come.

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I woke up in a fog as I always do. Reading Logos helps lift the veil. I wonder if I should read though. Maybe it's just a matter of the drugs wearing off. Maybe, I can remember without reading.

Maybe Logos is lying to me and there is no Fill. Maybe he's a figment of my imagination that I invented to alleviate my isolation.

Speak of the Devil.

Fill came in while I was writing. I drew a picture of him now, in case I forget his face again so I know who he is when he first walks in.

"The Doc figures you have finished reading since you're writing now so he wants you to come with me," Fill said as he jaunted into the room. He seemed almost excited to see me.

I looked up from Logos. "How would he know that?"

Fill stopped mid-step and then shrugged, "You ready, Eddy?"

"My name is Eddy?" I asked but Fill laughed a quick "no".

I wanted to ask him my name, but then the rat started twitching its tail again and so I decided I better not.

As we walked down the hallway, Fill sang a song with the chorus: "The night you can't remember, the night I can't forget." I decided he's teasing me.

The Doc asked more of the same questions and about my intense feelings of guilt. "What is it that you are supposed to have done?"

I shrugged. I don't know. I really don't. "Maybe, it's so bad that I've blocked it out. Maybe, it is so bad that is why I don't remember anything," I suggested.

"Interesting theory," he said and leaned back in his chair. I don't like talking to the Doc. He only reflects whatever I say. Fill is the one I need to work on.

As Fill helped push me past the door to the Sleep Room, I asked, "Why are you helping me?"

"I'm not. I'm just doing my job," he replied.

"Was it your job to kiss my face the other night?" I said with gritted teeth.

"Jesus Christ. Are you going to bring this up every single fucking day?" he cried.

"I don't know. Did I bring it up yesterday?"

"Why don't you consult that fucking diary of yours and find out."

"Fuck you," I said and then bolted down the hallway away from him.

It didn't take him long to catch up to me for soon he had me tackled to the floor. I punched and kicked at him as hard as I could, but he all too easily had me in a sleeper hold, and then was jerking me up off the floor like a ragdoll.

"You're not making this any easier on yourself," he breathed hotly into my ear as I tried to wiggle free. The coarse hairs of his stubble prickled the skin on the back of my neck sending shudders down my spine.

"Need any help?" a man's voice said. And I looked up to see a figure of a man all dressed in black with padded shoulders watching us. Casually slinging a rifle over his shoulder. He seemed amused.

"It's all good," Fill wheezed onto my neck. "She'll behave now, right? Won't you?"

I could feel Fill jerk my head back and forth in agreement. Fill must have put on a good enough show of being in control at least because soon he was slinging me back into my room by himself.

Inside, I slapped and kicked him, but he just grabbed me by the face, pushed me hard on the bed, and evaded my kicks as he snapped out the door.

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I'm sitting on the edge of a bed in a hotel room in a wife-beater that clings to my wiry hairy chest. Bony tanned legs stick out from my boxers. As I run a hand through my thinning hair, I see a reflection of myself in the mirror: my hair sticks up in thin tufts of blond waves above a long face with a hounded eyes and a long nose that pinches up narrow at the top and then swings broad and wide at the bottom. My face would probably be described as affable if it did not carry the mark of the paranoiac on it.

I have one thought coursing through my mind. "This is the way out. The only way out," I say over and over to myself as I stare out the window in front of me where dawn is just breaking.

I rise on two shaky legs, but then steel myself. I dig my black-socked heels into the soft carpeting and then sprint towards the window, crashing through the glass, up and out and then I'm back to that same dream where I am falling

and falling

and falling

and falling.

But as I fall, I'm questioning. Everything seems wrong about this. Implausible. The room was too short for me to have gained any traction. The window too small to have performed my Olympic flip through it. The glass shattered too easily at my touch. None of it is making sense, and I realize that I am remembering their version. The one they want me to believe happened. (marginalia: who are they? I don't know)

[Deleted]

Another dream. I am Sugar again and she is rolling up her black stockings at the edge of an embroidered and beaded black bedspread. The wall in front of her is a Spanish red. A velvet painting of a matador and bull hangs on it.

A cigarette hangs from Sugar's bottom lip. "Last guy?" she sighs.

Hunter's tinny voice in our ear says, "Last guy, I promise...For the night, of course." For a moment, I think I am in Hunter's body, hearing his voice in my head but realize this is impossible as I wear Sugar's body. I wish to crane my neck to look and find where the voice is coming from but Sugar has no such ideas. The hotel? room seems empty. In the reflection in the long mirror over the dresser, I can only see two wooden boomerang chairs and no one sitting in either of them.

Sugar reaches around the back of our dress and tries to clasp the zipper hanging low but too high from the waist. She sighs again. This time in exasperation.

"Leave it," Hunter's voice says in her ear, "It'll be down soon enough." I realize that the voice is only in my left ear and decide there is a microphone implanted there.

Sugar replies, "Getting sloppy."

Hunter laughs cruelly, "I'm certain he could care less about that."

Sugar snaps her head up and glares at the mirror in front of it, boring holes through it with her eyes. If looks could kill.

The voice "bahahaha's".

Sugar stands up and turns around to make the bed when there is a knock at the door.

"Send 'em in," Sugar says.

The door swings open. A burly tall man in a dark suit holds it open for a skinny man in horn-rimmed glasses in a trim suit. The skinny man hesitates at the door.

"Well, don't just stand there," Sugar purrs as she beckons him to take a step forward.

The skinny man replies, "You know, I don't normally do this."

"Do what? We ain't doing a thing at all."

"Well, I guess we aren't...a-a-at-at the moment, anyway." He takes an awkward step in, and the burly man closes the door. The skinny man snaps his head back at the sound of latch.

Sugar crosses over to a night table where a mini-bar has been set up. "Let me pour you something to drink," she calls over her shoulder at the man.

"Oh, I don't drink. Mother's a teetotaler."

Hunter's voice roars in our head. Sugar quickly covers her ear at the sound while she pours the drink. She then deftly produces an eyedropper to squeeze two drops of brown liquid in the glass before squirrelling it away.

"There's a first for everything," she hums. Sugar turns and crosses toward the man, who now sits on the edge of the unmade bed. It feels very strange to me the way her hips swing like a pendulum as she walks. She holds out the drink to him in front of her chest (at his eye level) and sings, "Think of it as Momma's milk and it will go down smooth."

The man gives the glass a hard look before taking it.

Hunter whispers to an unseen persona, "I told you she's good. Trudy had the last one in tears at this point."

Sugar sits down beside the man, and winds her arms round his neck. "What is it you do?" she coos into his ear.

"I work for the district a-ahhhh, maybe it's best we don't talk about me. What is it you do?"

Sugar bats her eyes at him, "I'll give you three guesses." The man titters and blushes.

Hunter hisses in her ear, "Stop being cute; work him over." I can feel Sugar's body tense up at Hunter's command. I can feel she wants to reply, but she holds it back and bites her tongue.

She begins to rub the man's shoulders as he downs the glass. "You're so tense...Whatever it is, your job must be very stressful."

The man sighs and hands the emptied glass to Sugar. He lays his back down and stares at the ceiling. His voice trembles as he says, "Today, particularly so...."

"Attagirl," Hunter's voice whispers and I'm glad when the dream ends there.

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I woke up to the sound of whimpering. It must have been early yet because I could see where Logos was - untouched on the corner of the bed where I had left him.

I sat up and tried to source the cries. The sound reminded me of a baby rabbit I saw once, paralyzed from a broken neck and crying for a swift death. And a fat indolent calico cat too lazy beside to finish off the job. I don't know whose memory this was. Only that whoever it was didn't have it in them to put it out of its misery and I remembered feeling a particular loathing at that cat for it.

I soon realized the sound was coming from behind the wall to the left of my bed. I don't know what lay in the room beyond this one. Only that it wasn't part of the hallway.

I slid out of bed and the floor felt cool to my feet as I walked slowly to the wall. I pressed my ear against the wall and it felt like a slab of ice.

"Hello?" I called out while knocking gently against the plaster.

The cry hesitated for a moment. And then resumed.

I knocked again. "Hello?" I said.

"Hello?" a woman's strangled voice replied.

"What's your name?" I asked not knowing what else to say.

"Eve. What's yours?" she replied in between heavy sobs.

I hesitated and then swallowed. "I don't know."

Silence for a moment as Eve must have been considering the implications of this statement. Then the whimpering restarted. "I need a way out of here," Eve choked. "You know the way out?"

"I'm trapped here too," I answered.

Another silent chill. And then: "For how long?" Eve's voice ventured.

"I don't know."

Eve resumed her chore of tears. I wanted to comfort her. Give her a hug. I wrapped my arms flat against the wall and squeezed. "Don't cry." I soothed.

My head jerked at the sound of keys jingling at the door. I

looked just as it swung wide open and saw Fill standing there, his arms folded across his chest.

"Get back to bed," he commanded.

I puffed out my chest to him. "No," I retorted.

Fill stared me down for a hard minute.

He took a step toward me.

I held my ground.

Then his shoulders dropped and he quit the room.

I felt a surge of victory course through my lithe body.

It only lasted a moment as I heard the door in the next room swing open and Eve began to scream: "No, don't touch me. Let me outta here! I'm not going back to that room! You can't make me." Her voice kept escalating higher and higher as I heard them struggle. But Fill must have grabbed the upper hand as I soon heard her horrible screams trail down the hallway.

And then finally: silence.

I stood alone in the room for a while but slumber soon overtook me and I laid down back in bed like the meek rabbit that I was.

Later, when I asked Fill about Eve he responded innocently, "Whoooo?" I knew then there wasn't any use to press him further on it.

It was if she never existed.

Perhaps when she asks of me, he responds in kind.

[Deleted]

I'm staring at a white stucco ceiling. My body feels soft, so I figure I must be Sugar. Soon, a long drag on a cigarette confirms it as I feel my honey bee stung lips with the tips of my fingers.

I hear a door open. I look up from the rumpled bed I'm lying in. Hunter steps out of the Spanish red door beside the dresser that I had mistaken previously for a hotel room linen closet. Inside, I can see a small dark room behind him with a large boxy film camera poking its eye towards the inside pane of the mirror's glass. And another man writing notes beside it.

I flop my head back down on the pillow while Hunter prowls overtop Sugar's body. "Ugh, please," is her response to his advances. "No, I mean it. I've had a long night."

Hunter mockingly pouts, "Oh, your poor tired and sore back." His fingers dive under both sides between my back and the bed, and he starts to massage.

Still exasperated, "Why don't you give Trudy a ring. She doesn't have half my workload."

"That's because you are our best and brightest. In more ways than one," Hunter nuzzles our neck. I feel as if our skin should be crawling, but Sugar's isn't. He stops to look her with his heavy-lidded bedroom eyes and says, "In fact, we, or I rather, think you are in line for a promotion."

I can feel Sugar arch her eyebrow toward him as if to say, "A promotion?"

The smell of Hunter's warm intoxicating breath fills my drowsy face as I hear him ask, "How'd you like to get your teeth fixed?"

It always takes some time getting used to my own body again after the dreams. I feel around my teeth with my tongue now as I write. They feel different from Sugar's. Straighter. No gap between the two front teeth.

Maybe I was promoted too?

[Deleted]

I remember what the ceiling ocean is called now. It is a one way glass. Used in interrogation rooms. They are watching down on me. Like I'm a rat.

I'm actually writing this underneath the bed. I might as well stay here until Fill comes, if he does.

Last night I dreamt of monkeys in cages dying while I watch inside the wiry man's body that is always falling in my dreams. I know I should be proud of my accomplishment, getting monkeys to die effectively, but instead, I feel full of deep regret. And fear. I try to connect my suspicious suicide from the other dream with the monkeycide in this one but it seems to be a stretch. I don't feel suicidal at all. Only: like my conscience is being pricked by this on some level that doesn't have anything to do with monkeys in cages.

Perhaps these aren't dreams or memories at all. Perhaps, the four people I dream of every night – Sugar, Hunter, the student, and this man who falls and lies on the pavement – are all imprisoned in my mind for crimes they have committed. And I am their jail.

And maybe they are my prison as well.

[Deleted]

Until last night there have only been four presences so far? Sugar, Hunter, the falling man, and the student with the broad nose. Now it is five. I hope there are no more. It's getting hard for me to keep them all straight.

I'm in a small cramped and dirty cell and I wear a strange blue uniform. I look down at my hands and am surprised to find them a dark cocoa color. I cradle my body in my arms. It feels battered and broken, but not near as bad as the time I lie dying on the concrete sidewalk.

The cell door squeals opens, and a Korean man walks in. He wears a course light grey suit with a red belt and piping. My body feels a loathing toward this man I can't understand. But at the same time, a queer devotion and hunger. Like a keen desire to do whatever this man is about to ask of us. I feel a war wage erupt between the two strong emotions.

In an accent, the man only quietly asks me if I'm ready to talk. I shake my head, and he leaves just as he came. With no emotion.

And then I can feel my body anxiously anticipate what is bound to come next. This dark man that I wear has his own rat living in the pit of his stomach. It's larger, and with sharper claws than that of mine. The door opens, and more men come in. All in the same uniform as the last. And then it begins.

Fill found me huddled in the corner, scratching at my arms until they bled. I think he slapped me in the face once or twice. Shook me violently while shouting for help. The doctor soon came, and pricked me with a needle.

Fill is watching me now. Well, he must always be watching, but now he is sitting at the desk, while I hide beneath the bed. I think he's afraid to leave me.

But, I so feel calm now. My fingertips feel numb even. The man's cries are on mute.

I had hoped to have bled the man totally from my system with every stroke of my pen, but I must have used the wrong colored ink.

[Deleted]

I am in a small clean and smart boardroom as Sugar as she tugs down the fingers of her small white gloves onto her hands and slips her purse over one forearm. The room has wide open windows framed by deep blue curtains that look out over the cityscape.

Whatever meeting has just occurred, it is now clearly over. Sugar rises from her seat in front of the polished mahogany table, nods at the gaunt and sharp looking blonde lady smiling at her, and glides out of the room when I realize that Sugar no longer bounces on her heels when she walks.

Outside, in the hall, there is a row of pretty gals all more or less dressed in the same pointy bodices, flared skirts and white gloves. We continue to glide past them with a serene smile on our lips, and out the double doors past the sign hanging outside that says: Ford Models.

We continue to glide down the steps and out the door onto the busy street. The day is bright and gleaming. Men pass by in sharp fitted suits topped with hats. Women in skirts and pointed bodices. Finally, we stop at a shiny and round black car door and open it.

Hunter is inside at the driver's seat. He lays a tanned red forearm on the wheel and looks at us expectantly. "Well," he inquires.

I get in. Close the door. The car feels huge to me, a luxury of space for my legs to unfurl in. And I realize that I must have been in smaller, much more compact cars, myself at some point in my history for this one to feel so large. I flip down the mirror and dig around my purse with one hand, pulling out a compact.

I pause before powdering my nose to look at Hunter, "Swell. She said I had good teeth." I flash a smile at myself in the mirror and notice my teeth are perfectly straight now. No gap.

"Good," he smiles as if he was just proven right about something. "It's time for your special training."

My voice cracks as I whip my head towards him, "Special training for what?"

I would like to know as well but Hunter just shrugs and starts the car and soon I wake up. I am certain I will find out soon enough.

[Deleted]

I woke up this morning with my mattress on the floor. They took my bed. So I've crawled under the mattress. See if they can watch me now.

[Deleted]

The wiry body in suit and tie tells me I'm wearing the same body as the from the hotel room where I sat and leapt out the window. But all the suicidal thoughts are absent as I calmly open the front door to a charming bungalow and hang my fedora on the hat stand inside a room the color of a robin's egg.

In the wood-paneled living room, I find a horsey-faced brunette in a white form-fitting blouse and flared skirt sitting in front of a tray of food in front of a black and white television console. A grainy tall Caucasian man is on the screen, standing amongst a sea of Asians in a courtroom. He is drawling in a Southern accent, "If my son asks me what I did in Korea, how can I tell him..."

The brunette looks up at me with sad eyes and says, "Oh, isn't it awful, Frankie? He's just denounced America in front of the world. The whole lot of them did."

"Who is?" I ask while being pleased that I finally have a name for myself. The man on the TV wears the same strange blue uniform I had worn back as the dark room in the small cell. He continues to drawl, "How can I go back and tell my family..."

"The POWs captured in Korea," the woman hisses, "They are telling just downright wicked lies, saying the U.S. Government was having them performing biological warfare on civilian villages there. Can you believe that?" Her voice is high-pitched and tight.

I cross over to a minibar set in a corner curio and pour myself a drink. "Commie bastards must have brainwashed the poor suckers," I say as a cold-sweat pours through my host's body. I throwback my head and chug the drink swiftly. It burns my throat all the way down.

(Trans. Note: Drawing can be found on the following page.)

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I woke up with a stiff neck and back, and found myself on the floor. They took everything, even Logos. Those fuckers.

I just lied on the floor, my back towards them. I wanted to cry, but didn't want to give them the satisfaction, so I just held it in.

It was a long time before Fill came, which gave me time to remember some things like the sound of Fill's voice singing. I tried to sing one of the songs, but the lyrics just kept going in circles: "She'll be coming round the mountain when she comes," and I began to worry she might never arrive.

I kept my stomach on the floor when Fill walked in. He sat down cross-legged across from me, but I refused to look up at him.

He sighed and said, "Why are you making things harder on yourself?"

I replied by singing the lyric over again, louder now.

He waited for a while as I sang. Then finally, "Look, your ice cream is beginning to melt."

I rolled to my side and looked up at him. He was holding two plastic bowls of vanilla ice cream on his lap.

"What's that for?" I asked.

"Peace offering," he said as he placed a bowl in front of me. "Since we aren't allowed to smoke the pipe inside."

I rolled back onto my stomach, and tried to forget the cool refreshing taste of ice cream. It would be a nice break from apples.

I could hear Fill savor his dairy treat. "You know it's not like we want to watch you, or are taking notes. We have to watch you for your own good. Ensure you don't pose a harm to yourself."

I looked up at him again. "Why would I?"

"Let's just say you don't have the greatest track record for self-preservation."

I wondered what he meant, but somehow I knew. It's why I'm here.

And then, I don't know why I did it, but the next thing I did was scream, "Maybe you just like to watch," and then grabbed the bowl and flung it onto his face. I'm actually a little shocked and

embarrassed that I lost my temper like that.

He didn't get mad like I expected him to. Instead, he casually wiped his face with the back of his sleeve and said, "You need to play this smart. Keep your strength up." He gave me a hard look, picked up the bowls and left the room, leaving Logos and a pen behind.

[Deleted]

I'm leaving Sugar's body. Actually, being pushed out. I can feel Sugar slip away from me, but someone else is there, someone or something new, filling up her space and pushing me out. Taking residence and taking over.

Now I'm out of her body, and I can see her. For a moment, I worry I'm seeing her through Hunter's eyes again. But then I realize I don't have a body of my own. So how is it that I can see? Perhaps these are dreams and not memories after all.

We are in a small spare office with deep purple carpeting and drawn curtains. Sugar's eyes are closed and her shoulders are slumped. The Magician stands beside her droning his words lazily. (Marginalia: How do you know he's called The MagiCIAn?) I can also sense Hunter in the room with us; feel his energy larger than life as usual.

Seated in front of us is a blonde woman, with her head down limp at her chin. Her body is lithe, thin, full of acute angles. On a small table in front of us is a gun.

The man is saying, "When I tap your shoulder, you will feel an incredible rage and shoot Trudy. She must die. You will not hesitate to kill her. She has betrayed you. Once you shoot her, you will wake up, not knowing what you have done."

I watch as the man taps Sugar. Her eyes spring open but are glassy as she grabs the gun and points it at Trudy. Sugar's mouth is drawn into a firm cruel line as she squeezes the trigger. "Click," the gun says and suddenly I have been sucked back into Sugar's body and am seeing through her eyes again.

I look down at the gun in my hand and then at the Magician. His face is long and oval and he has oblique mesmerizing eyes. His blonde hair is greased in waves above his oval serving dish ears. He smiles at me and says, "Your orders are to shoot Trudy."

Sugar blinks for a moment, and then says, "I will not. She is my friend. Say, what do you think this is?"

The Magician smiles at Hunter, and Hunter grins back at us.

And then I woke up.

Still on the floor.

[Deleted]

Hunter and I step into the car of a Ferris wheel. The safety bar is latched in and then Hunter stares at me with hungry eyes. Sugar's heart skips a beat but she feels none of the fear I do. He slides over and tries to kiss us.

Thankfully, Sugar pushes him away, laughing, "Stop that now. People will see."

However, Hunter is not one to be deterred. He pulls us into him and says, "See what I care." Then he plants his lips on ours and kisses us deeply. Sugar clearly enjoys it far more than I do. Her heart trips up in her chest and I feel as if I've got tangled up in the feet of it. I feel sad, realizing this, while undoubtedly not hers, is my first real kiss. Well, the first that I can remember, anyhow.

Suddenly our feet feel as if they have lurched up through our stomach into our jaw. When Hunter finally breaks apart from me, we realize we are high in the sky, and the whole city seems to twinkle below. Sugar lets out a small gasp and clings to Hunter's hand.

"You ain't scared, are ya?" Hunter laughs as I nod. With a wicked glint in his eye, Hunter starts to rock back and forth. The whole car begins to ricket, and I feel as if my heart has tumbled outside the rails. And I keep waiting to hear the splat down below.

Sugar lets out a small cry and tries to melt back into the seat. "St-st-st-stop!" she shivers but her cries only serves to encourage him more. We feel nauseous, and tears well up in the corner of our eyes, but there Hunter is laughing all the louder.

Sugar starts to hit his arm, "Stop it! Stop it!" We both begin to scream as waves of nausea bubble up from our stomach and the whole twinkling world feels like it is going to flip head over heels. And I close my eyes, and cry like the baby right before the bough breaks.

I woke up with a start to find myself back in a bed. I hate that they know I won't hide on them anymore just so I can secure a little comfort for myself.

[Deleted]

I woke up to the feeling of a warm wet cloth sweeping over my eyelids. The washcloth lifted from my face, and then I could hear it swirling in water. I bolted up in bed and opened my eyes to find Fill wringing out the cloth into a metal bowl full of water with his back towards me.

On turning to face me, he almost jumped out of his skin, knocking the bowl off the metal tray it had been sitting on.

"Jesus Christ, what are you doing up?" he cried.

"Am I dead?" I asked.

"I dunno. Do you feel dead?" he said, while picking up the bowl, and tossing the sopping cloth inside.

"Isn't this a morgue?" I said, looking around the unfamiliar room. It had two long metal slabs in the middle. The type coroners used in autopsies. Across from me was a long counter on top of locked metal cabinets and housing a grime-covered sink in the middle. And then there were various medical instruments strewn about in various states of rust. The dingy emerald green room had a sick medicinal smell to it and cloudy glass block windows that one couldn't see out of.

"Maybe it is; maybe it isn't," Fill replied while mopping up the water with a towel he procured.

I suddenly realized I was hooked up to an intravenous. And then noticed the myriad of electrodes cemented to my exposed chest. I immediately covered myself over with my arms.

A crooked smile cornered Fill's lips. "Nothing I haven't seen before, darling," he drawled. But he still turned his back to me while I donned the top half of my jumpsuit.

He refreshed the bowl of water, and returned with a new cloth. "Those are a bitch to remove. You sure you don't want me--"

"I can manage," I said and then started to discreetly pick away at each one.

Fill crossed over to my IV drip, and made some adjustments. I stared at the tattoo on his arm. It was of a man in a short tunic with long hair standing between two pillars, pushing them over.

"Who's that?" I pointed.

"Samson."

"Who's he?"

"He's the guy who brought the whole mother-fucking place down."

"Why?"

"Because some bitch stole his power."

"How?"

"She cut off his hair."

"Why?"

"Jesus, you're like some fucking little kid sometimes."

I could feel a cold numbness spread through me as Fill hopped to sit on the counter opposite of my bed. Out of his breast pocket, he pulled out a joint and then lit it. For some reason, I thought this was strange, and furrowed my brow.

"They turn a blind eye to anything I do in here," he explained, pointing to the corners of the ceiling. "Look, no cameras."

I felt a slight chill when he took a step towards me but he only offered me a puff on the joint. I declined so he said, "Suit yourself."

I settled my head back down on the pillow as the coolness spread up towards my neck. As my eyelids grew heavy, I could see Fill pop the cap off a bottle of rubbing alcohol, and reach for some cotton swabs.

He took a step towards me. I whispered, "Do me a favor."

"What is it?"

"Sing me to sleep," I asked.

Fill looked me over for a moment, deciding. Finally, he leaned his arms onto the side of the bed and then started to soulfully sing as I closed my eyes:

"I went down to St. James Infirmary,
Saw my baby there,
Set down on a long white table,
So sweet, so cold, so fair..."

I woke up to finding no remnant of the electrodes on my chest. I wonder how was it that I remember? Perhaps Fill is also a dream like the others. Or a distant memory from the past.

I'm wearing Frankie, sitting at a large round wooden table with a bunch of boisterous army types who all have had too much to drink. My stiff wool suit scruffs my bony wrists at the cuffs, and I'm aching to yank my tie off.

The barroom has an old European feel to it, with everything made out of wooden rafters and beams painted almost black. In fact, all the colors are muted, even the clothes on our backs and the pallor in our cheeks, and I begin to wonder if Frank is colorblind. The men, and one woman – a coiffed blonde – at my table all speak English but the din around us is in German, and every time I hear someone speak in it, I feel a little unease. Nonetheless, the five of us are having a grand old time when those seated around me suddenly go sullen and silent.

A middle-aged man walks by. His face is gaunt and tight, and his ears stick out like a lizard's frilled collar. His squirrely eyes stare straight through us as he passes. "Fuckin' Nazi," my companion on my right says under his breath.

"Whaddya mean?" I inquire of him, and search around the whole table at my companions when he doesn't answer. A tense moment passes.

The burly dark-haired man across the table from me finally spills. "It's Blome. One of the pigs who performed experiments on prisoners at Dachau."

"Oh, get off your high horse why don't you," snaps the woman, her carefully coiled curls bouncing, "You are a Rough Boy yourself, well, ain't ya?"

I can feel heat rise through my neck, passing my necktie, and then hitting the back of my teeth. "Well, aren't you going to do something about it?" I cry. "Arrest him!" I rise from my barstool with a challenging gaze.

Everyone at the table shifts uncomfortably. "Well," I demand.

"It's not so simple," the burly man replies.

"What do you mean, it's not so simple? He's a Nazi, ain't he?"

The woman reaches across the table and touches my shoulder softly, "Relax, Frankie. He's one of ours now." I stare at her resigned tired eyes. Her hand withdraws from my shoulder and then snakes around her glass again.

I look down at my drink and swish it in circles for the longest time. I can't look back up at them. Not in the same way, ever

again. Then I set the glass on the table and walk away.

As I leave, I can hear the woman behind me mutter, "Let him go."

[Deleted]

Fill and I had been walking back from the Doc's when we heard sudden shouting and pandemonium. Up at the mouth of the hallway we could see men in padded black run past and down the corridor perpendicular to this one.

Fill looked at me, unsure what to do. Finally, he grabbed me by the hand and pulled roughly. "Come on," he ordered.

We ran down the hallway together and wound our way down corridors unbeknownst to me before.

Finally, we turned a corner. At the end of the hallway was a gaggle of orderlies, doctors and men in black padding perched in front of an open door. One doctor held a lifeless young bald woman in his arms. Her wrists were dripping with blue ink and red blood. I could not make out any of her features. She was as faceless and nameless as I was.

Another orderly turned and saw us. "Nothing to be done here," he quipped to Fill.

Fill didn't look at me for the longest time but he kept squeezing my small hand in his hot one, tighter and tighter. My fingers began to feel numb and I soon worried they would turn blue.

Finally, he whipped round and tugged me along behind him in heavy silence. Not looking at me at all and put me back in my room, wordlessly.

Like I was a ghost merely shadowing him.

Fill arrived after I had finished reading Logos and I stood up ready to see the Doc. Funny, how easily things become a habit, even without memory. But he climbed onto the foot of the bed, rolled onto his back and stretched.

I stared at him, unsure what this meant. "Aren't we going to see the Doc?" I asked.

"Not today," he drawled, still stretching and staring up at the ceiling. "He's got a meeting with some big wigs from head office. So you'll have me all to yourself all afternoon."

I'm a little alarmed by this news, and I realized that I still haven't decided if Fill is a perv or not. "You mean it's just the two of us now?"

Fill laughed heartily, "I wish! This place is crawling with Veil bots. And they take their orders very seriously. But you are my only ward as of now so no one cares if you are on the receiving end of all my attention."

He seemed sad when he says this. "What do you mean, 'as of now?'" I pressed.

He swung his head at me. "I mean, you're the last of the lot. You've lasted a lot longer than any of them. Which makes you their success story."

I sat back down on the edge of the bed. "Were there many?"

Fill shrugged, "Enough". His voice sounded thin and weary.

"Where are they all now?"

"Gone," he said and I didn't want to press further. Then he sat up chipper as usual and said, "Let's play a game." He drew a pack of cards from his breast pocket.

"What are we playing?"

"Solitaire," he said while shuffling.

"That's a strange game for two," I responded.

"This is a special kind. I call it Lover's Quarrel. Did you know that cards can talk?"

I must have been giving him a look of disbelief, because then he insisted, "No, really. For example, right now the Queen is saying to the Jack, 'I know you are some crazy fool!'"

I laughed and he grinned. He went on to teach me the strangest game I've ever played, well the only one I can remember and I still can't quite make out the point of it all. Then he made me play me the same dummy hands over and over again. When he was certain I knew the game well enough, he did the strangest thing of all. He suddenly reached for my leg and drew my foot over onto his lap while saying, "Do you know, I once knew a woman who could play cards with her feet?" He started to insert sets of two cards facing each other between each of my toes. Then he looked up at me with his green saucer eyes, "Do you think you could play like that?"

I drew my foot away and shook the cards off. "You've just been dying to get your hands all over my feet," I muttered.

Fill laughed and then flopped back down on his back. "It's the high point of my existence. Every time I give you your sponge bath, I just can't wait until I get to your little piggies."

I couldn't tell if he's being serious or mocking me again. "Since I'm up so many hours during the day now, why can't I just bathe myself?"

Fill considered this more seriously than I would have given him credit for. "I'll ask the Doc about that." Then he rolled over and sat up on one elbow, "Have you ever heard of alphagetti math?"

I responded negatively, so he proceeded to tell me all about it. And then much to my chagrin, drilled me over and over on it. At one point I even asked, "Who are you, Alex Trebek?"

This caught him by surprise and so he asked, "Do you even know who that is?"

I tried to remember but for some reason all I could think of is a moustache. Fill laughed at that. But, even though Fill was laughing at that, the sound rung hollow to me.

Fill rose to leave and something felt off, strange. I realized what it is. "No singing?" I asked while he opened the door and placed the deck back inside his breast pocket.

"Don't feel like it much today," he replied with a crooked smile and then closed the door behind him.

[Deleted]

Fill came in my room again today. Humming. I took this as a good sign.

He waved me over with crook of his head, and said, "Let's scooby."

I rose from my chair and began to follow, only this time he walked down the opposite end of the hallway that we had not been down before.

"Where are we going?" I asked.

"Showers," he said. "Doc gave you the a-okay."

I smiled, feeling rather all grown-up at the idea, and then hated myself for being grateful to Fill and the Doc.

We winded our way through the maze of the building. Finally, Fill opened a door to a small bathroom large enough for a toilet, sink and shower stall. No mirror. The walls were cement block painted in semi-gloss cream.

Fill looked at me apologetically, "I can't leave you alone, but you can change in the stall and toss me your jumper."

I nodded and walked in, sliding the glass door behind me. As I took off my jumper, I could see that Fill had turned his back to me and I felt a little less anxious. Perhaps he isn't as skeevy as I've made him out to be.

"Don't forget to scrub between your toes," he called over his shoulder, and I took this for some weird flirtation.

I turned on the water as piping hot as I could get it and let it pelt my back. I turned as I scrubbed my scalp and then caught a diffused reflection of myself in the door.

I stared for a moment as the steam obliterated it. I couldn't make myself out. The features were like blobs. I wiped the fog off the pane, but the light was too strong and my reflection just wasn't sharp enough to make it out.

Through the glass, I could see Fill had hung a towel on the handle. "Are you going to be in there all night?" he called, still standing with his back to me.

I laughed, "I might," but I turned off the water soon after, hoping my consideration of him will spawn more trips to the shower. Fill awkwardly handed me a new jumper with his back still turned as I toweled off.

We were silent on the way back. And then I finally built the courage to ask, "What do I look like?" Fill stopped in his tracks and glanced over at me. "Well, let me see." He scrutinized my face closely. "Your face is nice enough...if it wasn't for that third eye in the middle."

"Really," I said, unimpressed with his joke.

Fill laughed, "I can't describe what you look like." He started walking again.

"What color are my eyes at least?" I called out after him.

"Blue."

"And my hair?"

"You don't have any."

"Before?"

"Whatever it was, it wasn't your natural color," he snickered. He rounded the corner and I followed behind him back to my room not wanting to know how he knew that.

[Deleted]

Sugar and I are at a cocktail party wearing a beaded black dress made out of material that reminds me of a shower curtain. We smile demurely at several well-dressed people walking by before poking at a canapé in our gloved hand. The men nod with wide open smiles. The women: with tight-lipped ones. We are standing in front of a buffet table in what seems to be a banquet room of a posh country club. The upholstery and furniture is swank, the drapery: froufrou.

Trudy approaches us in a turquoise evening gown. "Hunter wants to know what's taking so long."

"Ugh, what is with him?" We nibble on the canapé. It is both dry and squishy at the same time, and feels like I've poured concrete and caulk down my throat.

Trudy shrugs, "He's insecure." We laugh and then whisper towards her ear, "He didn't have a problem with that when the johns were lining up."

Trudy hangs her head low toward us, "All those stiffbs could offer you were their dicks and a couple of bucks. Senator's sons can offer you a future."

We stop chewing and I realize that Sugar must be mulling this over.

"And what are you two conspiring about?" a matronly voice accuses, but there is warmth and mirth behind the question.

We look up, and an upholstered silver-haired woman is staring at us through a raised monocle. Her face and body are both broad and she has slight smirk in the corners.

Sugar smiles without missing a beat, "Oh, we were just making little snide remarks about everyone's attire."

"As you should, you smart-looking things. I understand you are both models. You know, I've always heard that models are invited to the best parties. Perhaps, I should become one?" the woman laughs heartily at her own joke.

Before Sugar can respond with anything clever, a tall 'golden boy' with a dazzling smile appears. He has the body of an Olympic swimmer and the gleaming teeth of a toothpaste actor. "I thought I'd find you here," he addresses the matron but his eye is on Sugar the whole time. As if on cue, the matron says, "Oh, David, you're just in time to meet my new best friend. This is...I'm sorry dear...What did you say your name was?"

Sugar places a gloved hand in the golden boy's open palm.
"Maddy," she smiles. "Maddy Walker."

[Deleted]

Went to see the Doc again with Fill today. More of the same questions again. Here are my answers:

Yes

No

Sometimes

No

Definitely No

Perhaps

I'll try

Instead of taking me to my room after, Fill brought me to the shower again.

As we walked, I started thinking about my dream of Sugar last night. How she could walk into a room and have all eyes on her. How it feels to feel powerful and electric in her skin. Unlike the way I feel in mine.

Fill gave me a queer-eyed sideways glance. "Why are you walking like that?"

"Like what?"

He laughed, "Swinging your hips like the Liberty Bell?"

I suddenly realized I'd been walking like Sugar. I stopped, trying to remember how exactly it is that I walk.

"You a'ight?" he paused to wait for me.

I nodded meekly and then scampered over to him.

Fill shook his head and complained, "Man, do I ever need a coffee if I'm going to get through the rest of this day with you."

And I immediately quipped, "I like my coffee like I like my men. Hot, rich and creamy in my mouth". As soon as I said it I slapped my hand over my mouth and hot shame rose to the tips of my ears. I must have learned it from Sugar.

"How many times have you used that line before?" Fill drawled with a shit-eating grin.

"Once to my knowledge," I whispered apologetically. I felt so ashamed. I didn't know why. I just feel like I'm in a constant state of guilt and everything I do is wrong somehow. Sinful, even. Perhaps the Sleep Room they send me to each night is really a Catholic School.

"Well, to my knowledge: plenty of times," he scoffed at me.

He gave me a hard look and said, "It's nice to see you again."

At that moment I hated him. Not because he's a total skeezy creep that tells me when I can shower. But because he remembers me. And I don't.

"What do you mean by 'you'?" I asked.

"Nothing," he shrugged.

I glared at him as I entered the shower and then took an unusually long one to punish him for being such a tight-lipped asshole.

We walked back together in sullen silence. Finally, "What do you know about me?"

"Your room number is 546A and you are in ward 5."

"From before."

Fill's shoulders dropped and he sighed, "Nothing."

"Yes, you do know something."

Fill looked me square in the eye, "Anything I need to know about you they tell me. And there isn't anything I need to know."

"Who are you then?" I demanded as we neared my door.

"Me? I'm just your neighborhood John," he said as he jingled the keys in his hand.

"Your name is John?"

Fill let out one of his cryptic mocking laughs again as he opened the door to my room. "For you, darling, the name is Fill."

"Aha! So you do read Logos," I said thrusting a finger towards him as I walk into the room. Fill just shrugged and closed the door.

[Deleted]

I'm walking down a long institutional corridor in Frankie's thin legs. The walls are peeling paint the color of butter. I'm not sure if I'm in a hospital or prison, but I do hear animal screams haunting the hallway. The color palette is muted, as are all Frankie's memories, but perhaps the floors and walls are really only painted this way.

Every step brings me in the opposite direction of where I wish to be. Closer to the inhumane cries. Sometimes, it screams in a strange language that I suspect is Russian.

I rear a corner, almost on top of the screams now. At the end of the hallway is a large metal door and I decide: prison. Or mental hospital. The door is equipped with a small metal square peep window at eye level that I have to unbolt it and swing it open.

Inside the room, the screaming man's back is seated toward me, his arms pinned back in a painful position. Standing around him is several men, including my burly friend from the bar – one of the Rough Boys. His hands are bloody, as are the metal sharp instruments that line a metal tray beside the seated man. Behind them, in command, is Blome. The German's eyes dart to mine and he stares at me with cold indifference. The Rough Boy looks up, and then his face falls, almost ashamed. We stare at each other for a moment and then he resumes his work. I swing close the metal peep door, which whimpers for oil over the man's cries.

[Deleted]

"Well, isn't it Miss High Society," Hunter accuses as I walk into the small office with purple carpeting. He sits at a desk with his feet on it, and slaps a newspaper down. "So glad, you could grace us with your presence," he spits.

Sugar barely looks down at the newspaper opened up on the Society Column as she walks by. A photo of her on the arm of the golden boy. "I see I made it to page 3," she bristles with a voice that has lost all of its former twang as if all the edges have been sanded down smooth.

Hunter rises and follows us to the door opposite of the one we had come in through. We begin to open it, but then he catches it with his hand while the other hand grips hold of a tangle of our hair, yanking our head back. I can feel several hairs being ripped from the root and I'm surprised at Sugar's ability to keep her cry of pain tight inside her throat where Hunter can't hear it. His breath bears down on the back of our neck, "That fucker sure has taken a shine to you."

Sugar responds calmly over her shoulder, "He's just a target to me. Like all the others." It is almost a whisper.

Hunter holds the door. We don't move a muscle. Finally, he cautions in a soft and slithery voice, "You just remember that," before letting go.

Sugar nods, and we take a stilted step away from him.

[Deleted]

Today, the Doc asked me the same questions. I decided to mix up my answers to:

No

Yes

Rarely

Yes

Definitely

Not possible

Perhaps

Maybe if he gets the point that I'm bound and determined to lie every time, he'll give up.

I haven't given up on Fill though. On our way back from the shower I brought up the fact he had kissed my face before pushing me into the Sleep Room.

He stopped in his tracks and dropped his shoulders with resignation. "So," he said quietly.

"See," I challenged. "That means something."

"Your hair smelled good. It doesn't prove a thing."

I dug in my heels, "I don't have any hair."

"It doesn't mean what you think it means." Then he shifted both his feet and his tactics. "Well, I mean, that depends..." he said and took a step towards me. I backed up, but he continued to snake my way. My back hit the wall of the hallway, and he positioned his two hands just above my head. He stared down at me and I realized how small I was to him. "What exactly are you thinking?" he craned his neck down on me until I can see the blackheads on his nose. I could feel his breath on my face and it tasted sour.

I knew he was just trying to creep me out. Throw me off track. I stared back at him, refusing to blink. "You can tell me how we know each other and I promise I won't tell Logos--" I rambled. But he cut me off and spat, "You are so fucking naive."

And then he was gone from me, and I had to chase after him to be let back into my room.

Number 6. Another woman. Well, at least I'm in a woman's *body*, but she doesn't feel like Sugar. Not like a woman at all. It is strange. I can't explain it. It's as if I've been born in the wrong body, but then again, I don't belong in here to begin with, let alone all the other bodies I invade.

I'm shuffling along a brick wall in a room with low ceilings and arches full of walking skeletons dressed in vertical blue striped uniforms. Some have yellow stars patched to their left breasts over numbered badges, others red or purple triangles. Mine is black, and the rest of the prisoners give me a wide breadth although it is quite cramped in here otherwise.

Amongst the crowd are men stationed in black cropped riding boots, and hats with shiny black brims and eagle winged insignias. A few hold rifles.

My head itches and I rub my bristling skull. As I find a scab the size of a straw-shaped hole, I notice a group of men looking at me. Doctors. In arm-bands. One is the man known to Frankie as Blome, only here he looks younger. But there are others beside. They all wear the same indifferent face.

One waves me over, and soon a guard is at my side escorting me over to them. And then I'm walking down a long corridor with doctors and guards, the pit of my stomach reeling.

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I'm riding Sugar's body as I always do. Her steps now are so much more measured, so much more refined and full of grace. We are weaving in and out of stalls at a market. Then on a bus. Then through the back streets of Chinatown, where she buys flowers. Then a taxi. Then another bus. I can't understand what she is thinking. It seems we are criss-crossing all over the city. But she is often checking over her shoulder with sly little movements.

Finally, there is a door at the side of a brick building. Sugar walks in and up several flights of stairs. I can feel her quicken her step. A flash of her reflection in the window pane in the stairwell: she is radiant, beaming, and translucent. Like a ghost.

At the top of the final flights of stairs – was it four? Or five? Sugar finally opens the door to the hallway floor. At a door that simply says 7, Sugar takes out the keys with trembling hands. She is humming.

We walk in. The small cream painted apartment is full of nothing but white light and a kitchen table with two chairs. Sugar goes to the kitchen and pulls out a can from underneath the sink. Fills it with water. Plops the flowers in. Arranges them and sets them on the table.

She stares out the window for a moment. Watches the busy street below. Her body feels content. This is not an emotion I'm used to wearing on Sugar.

I don't know how long we wait until finally Sugar decides to use the washroom. She opens the door.

In the white porcelain tub there is a dark form bobbing in the water. It is a man. Sugar's golden boy. Sugar screams. Then quickly covers her mouth over and slumps to the floor, tears streaming down her face.

I think perhaps she should call the police but Sugar has different ideas. She washes and dries her face while the body continues to float beside her. She gathers her things. Opens a window and then starts climbing down the fire escape. She doesn't hurry. She is cool and calm.

Then another criss-cross through the maze of the city only now her step is more hurried, clumsy, less graceful. The divergent smells assault me from all sides reminding me how isolated my room really is.

Then we are on a train. Sugar sits down opposite a tall handsome

man with a shock of black hair, greased to one side. His face is affable, a kind face, and he has soft yet eager eyes that light up when he sees her, although she doesn't seem to notice even though I do. Finally, he builds up the nerve to speak. "Pardon my intrusion, but aren't you Maddy Walker?" he asks as smooth as cream cheese.

Sugar looks up at him and blinks, "Yes." Inside she still trembles, but outwardly she plays it as cool as a cucumber. "I thought so. I'm Charlie Burke. Governor Nicholl's campaign manager. We met at his fundraiser."

"Is that so?" she seems much less excited than he is at their reconnection. "And where are you off to, today?"

"San Francisco of all places. For a convention."

"What a strange world," Sugar declares, "That's where I am going too. 'Charlie' you say your name is?"

He smiles broadly at her and nods, "I never cared much for my name until you said it just now."

Sugar forces a small laugh. But inside, I can still hear her whimpers.

Sugar is too shaken to feel glad to be free of Hunter. But I'm not. I'm elated he's gone. For now, at least.

[Deleted]

And he's back. :(

I'm in a tiny room with a boxy film camera set up beside me, pointing out the glass I'm seated in front of. On the other side of the glass is a room, deep Spanish red with black fringe and embroidery. And Sugar, glaring at me with almond shaped eyes and thick false eyelashes. Her hair is disheveled. She turns and I notice her dress is unzipped low at back.

And the killer I am wearing laughs out loud, feeling quite pleased in his larger than life self.

And then I wonder: is it *only* Sugar he mocks?

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Sugar/I enter a busy diner with bright orange walls and glide past the plastic brown tables and white vinyl chairs, cutting through the clouds of cigarette smoke. I see Charlie at a brown vinyl booth facing a man we can only view the edge of. Charlie, now with silver hair peppered at the temples, waves us over eagerly, and we go to him.

"Sorry, I'm so late," we say and then turn to introduce ourselves to the man. I feel Sugar stiffen before I even register that the man staring up at us is Hunter. His heavy eyelids are half-closed and he regards us with casual interest. He is a little more weathered than the last time we saw him.

"Darling, this is Jack. The man I've told you so much about. I believe you've already met," Charlie says enthusiastically while beckoning a waitress over.

Sugar feigns surprise as Hunter explains, "Yes, I believe it was in Havana."

Sugar draws a blank as she takes a seat beside Charlie, "I've never been to Havana. Perhaps you mean New York." She is not feigning it, she really doesn't remember ever going to Havana. Although for some reason I know she has been.

"Yes, I must be mistaken. I often mix the two places up," Hunter smiles.

Charlie laughs while a waitress pours Sugar a cup of coffee. "What two funny places to mix up. Neither is like the other in any regard." While Charlie speaks I can feel Sugar pull away from his rambling words into her own racing thoughts.

She doesn't notice Hunter pick up the sugar package, open and offer it to her. "Sugar?" he grins. "Yes?" she replies, coming out of her own train of thought.

Hunter seems pleased, but Charlie rebukes, "Darling, you never take sugar in your coffee."

"I'm sorry, my mind must have wondered. I suddenly feel a migraine come on. Darling, you won't mind if I leave you two to catch up," Sugar is rising before Charlie can even answer. She turns to Hunter and prods, "Mr...?"

"Call me, Jack."

"Jack, I'm so sorry to leave you like this."

"That's quite all right," he replies steadily. "I'll be in town

for a while; we will have plenty of time to get acquainted." Sugar nods and makes her exit. I can feel her knees buckle and wobble as she walks. The last thing I remember is Hunter's hearty laugh as we exit the restaurant.

[Deleted]

I'm lying in bed with the head of the horsey brunette buried into my hairy and wiry chest. It is dark, but even with the lights off, I know that I am Frankie, and this is my wife.

I sense it is late, and that we've been sitting like this, up in bed, for several hours.

"Maybe, it's time you got out," she hesitantly suggests and I swallow.

"How?" I say.

"Simply resign. The way most people do it," she suggests.

"I doubt they'll let me out as easy as that," I say while pinching her arm softly with the grip of my hand.

"They have to let you out. You work for the United States government not some fascist country," she counters.

I snort and then sigh. "You'd think so," was my only reply.

I don't think you can get out though. Once they have you, they will never let you go. Otherwise, I wouldn't have Frankie in my head now, would I?

[Deleted]

I guess the Doc wasn't very happy with my little mischievousness in skewing the results of his questionnaires so now he has me doing a battery of written IQ and psychological tests. They took up most of the day so I have no time to record my dreams. Which worries me a bit because why else are they keeping me here?

[Deleted]

In red high-heeled pumps, I am walking through a parking lot with a brown paper bag in one arm and a chubby baby with a shock of black hair in the other. The parking lot is bright, and the large pastel color cars all gleam in the sun.

A man stands in the middle of the black tarred laneway in front of me. At first the sun blinds me as to who he is, but then I realize: it is Hunter.

For a moment, neither of us move. Then I steal my back, and attempt to strut past him to avoid any inquisitive stares at our unlikely standoff.

Before I can pass him, Hunter moves forward and holds out his arms. "Let me get that for you," he says but I hold onto my groceries tighter. "Do not trouble yourself, I can manage," I say but then am all the more surprised when he reaches and takes the baby instead.

Hunter holds the baby gingerly in his arms and starts walking in the direction I had been walking in but my body suddenly feels like dirty bath water being drained down the tub. I quicken my step to match his long legs, and reach out for the baby. "No, really, it's quite all right," but he ignores my assertions.

Hunter stops in front of an aqua-colored car, the same one from the dream of his I had – the one he killed me beside – and nods toward it, "Aren't you going to open it?"

I don't know how I manage to get the doors open with such trembling hands. Hunter gets into the driver's side with the baby on his lap. I carelessly toss the groceries onto the floor of the passenger side as I get in, my eyes only on the baby, whose pudgy hands pat the driver's wheel. Hunter starts the car and we drive for a few minutes. I soon realize that Hunter is driving towards the town exit – toward the country – and a sharp pain stabs the insides of my lungs.

Finally, he speaks. "Nice set up you've got here."

"I'll leave with you tonight if you want. But please—"

"Leave? But you just got here! Besides you are exactly where I put you."

"Where you put me?"

"You just thought you'd live happily-ever-after with the campaign manager of a presidential candidate and think I had nothing to do with it?"

My lungs flare up with frostbite.

Hunter smiles, baring his sharp teeth. "Thought you left me of your own accord, escaped even?" he teases.

"But I, I, I left. I left after I found..."

"Mr. FancyPants drowned in a tub? Do you really think we would kill a senator's son just because you couldn't keep your legs together. I hate to say it, sweetheart, but that particular skill was never your forte."

"You mean...David's alive?"

"Geez, don't you guys get the papers out here in the sticks?" He pulls out a clipping from his breast pocket and hands it to me. Another society column. From a week ago. A different girl hangs on the arm of the golden boy now.

We are now driving in the country. It will be several minutes before we reach the next house, and then after that, a long stretch. Splinters of ice prick inside my blood veins.

"How can this be?" I ask. Tears brim inside my eyes, but I dare not let them stream.

"This be because I willed it. And whatever I will, you do, whether you realize you are doing it at the time or not."

It sounds preposterous but I realize it is true. It has always been true. I just didn't dare believe it.

Hunter continues, "You follow my orders like an obedient dog. If I can command you to meet a person, fall in love, start a family with him, spawn his child, think what else I can get you to do. Maybe, I'll decide what I want is for you to wake up in the middle of the night, draw the butcher's knife from that middle drawer in your kitchen, creep into the nursery—"

"No! Don't!" I cry, and suddenly I've taken the baby from his grasp and cling onto it on my lap.

Hunter laughs of course. It's always just a game to him.

He pulls to the side of the road alongside a ditch.

For a moment, neither of us says anything. Then he drawls, "Keep playing house and hope that call never comes."

And then he is out of the car, over the ditch, and into the woods. Away from us.

I notice just now I haven't been writing the last few days. I suspect that it is because I do not wish to remember what I have dreamt. That must be the case for I wish to forget last night's dream as well. But perhaps I have to get it down, so I can move onto better memories. I will be as sparse as possible.

My skin, the color of black coffee, feels bruised and battered. I feel worn and I want to give in. I'm in a small interrogation room painted grey. The room is crowded with the men that surround me, all American and All American. They keep grilling me about Korea and something I had said. They are trying to convince me I was brainwashed but I cry, "I remember, I remember. It wasn't a lie. It wasn't a deception. I spoke only the truth." I also hurl out accusations. Such as, "You know it be the truth too!"

Then they blindfold me, strip me down. And soon I'm being led to a Sleep Room of his own. And in my head, I hear his cry: "I will live through this, I will live through it."

[Deleted]

Fill came in today, swinging the door wide open, and saying, "Come on, Del, up and at 'em."

I looked up at him and said, "What did you call me?"

He looked around both ways, and said, "Nothing."

"You did, you called me Del."

"Yeah, short for Deleted. That's your name isn't it?"

I thought about this for a moment, and I could feel the rat twitching its tail in my stomach. "Yes, it is now." I replied and I got up and followed him to the Doc.

The Doc made me do more paper and pencil tests. He even vacated the room at one point. On the desk, he left the notebook he always wrote in. I stood up quickly and peered down. The top half of the page was just general comments on the answers I had given. A paragraph at the end of the page stated: "Subject demonstrates extraordinary echo memory capabilities. Short and long term memory functions are inhibited, most likely from..." I went to turn the page to read the rest, but I could hear the Doc returning so I quickly sat down again.

On the way back to my room, I asked Fill, "Does the Doc know you read my journal?"

Fill smiled and said, "I suppose he does."

"He's instructed you to read it?"

"No."

"But he lets you."

"The Doc turns a blind eye to a lot of things, lest of all me reading somebody's precious diary."

I pursed my lips at that. He regarded me with one eyebrow raised. "Do you want me to stop?" he wistfully inquired.

"Oh, what do I care," I replied sullenly.

"Good. Because I wasn't going to regardless," he said as he swung my door open.

I stepped inside. The door closed. I got Logos out and my pen and wrote this down: Eat Shit, Fill.

I am standing in a l-shaped turquoise kitchen in front of a white Formica table with chrome edging in the middle of the floor. I hear a coo, and my head snaps back to see the baby, sitting in a wooden high chair.

I smile at the baby and am about to hand it a biscuit with my creamed coffee hands when the turquoise phone on the wall rings.

I answer it, untangling the long squiggly cord with my fingers.

A husky voice on the other end says, "Is that you, Eden?" Already, I can feel Sugar slip away from me as I am also pushed out of her by the resident whom now answers in her place in quiet dull "yes's" to the instructions given out on the phone.

I am left to hover around Sugar's body as the resident who has taken over inside her robotically hangs up the phone.

I hear the baby begin to cry just as we leave the kitchen, but can't turn back to comfort it as I'm attached to Sugar's wandering body like a balloon on a string. She walks into a frilly canary yellow bedroom with a froufrou bedspread. Packs an overnight bag with the clothes from the vanilla dresser. Walks back out the bedroom, through the long rectangular shaped ochre and mustard upholstered living room with dark brown velvet drapes and shag carpeting to the front closet.

I can now hear the baby crying hysterically. And then we are out the door, into the car, and pulling out away from the bungalow with the verdant green lawn, leaving the baby alone inside.

[Deleted]

I'm holding an empty shot glass tight in my bony fist. I squeeze it tighter and tighter, certain that if only I squeeze tight enough the glass will liquefy and impregnate my body with its molten skin, infecting me with glass. And then my whole body will be glass. Easy to shatter.

"Frankie?" a man's voice says. I look up to see a tanned and freckled diamond shaped face stare back at me. The room – a log cabin – is melting all around the man's white brillo pad hair.

"Sidney," I manage to say, "Sidney. What have you put in my drink?" It feels as if I am talking in slow motion, while Sidney's body vibrates and twinkles in front of me. Several men in suits press down on me, their motions flaming in colors that I know Frankie has never seen before.

[Deleted]

Charlie paces across from Sugar in the ochre and mustard living room. It is night and the clock on the wall says 3:45. Charlie is shouting and waving his arms, and Sugar's cheeks are wet.

"What am I to think? I come home. You are gone. The baby is strapped in his chair, in hysterics, for God knows how long. Your car is found at the side of the highway? Then no word from you in four days?" Charlie's voice rises to a crescendo vibrating with anger.

Sugar just sobs into her hands as he continues to rail against her. Her body feels like she's been weeping for hours. I can only imagine how long this conversation has gone on before I got here. Charlie seems worn down and his voice is thin and reedy as he continues, "It's bad enough you would do this when we were first married. I tolerated it then against my better judgment thinking if only I gave you a bit of freedom...But I would never have believed you capable of endangering our child--"

Sugar finally lashes out, "-I wouldn't! I didn't! You have to believe me."

"Then explain yourself!"

"I can't! There is no explanation. I remember nothing!" It's true. She doesn't.

"Where were you?" he barks.

"I don't know! I don't know! I don't know!" she screams while she beats her fists into the mustard colored couch cushion.

Charlie takes a deep breath and sits down opposite to her. "I just don't understand it. It's like you are two different people sometimes."

For a long while nothing is said. The only sound is the ticking of the grandfather clock in the corner of the room.

Finally, Charlie draws his hands together in front of his mouth and purses his lips. He takes a deep breath and says very quietly, "If...there is anything you could tell me that would help me to understand this situation, speak now. Or pack your things and get out."

Sugar wipes her eyes and takes a deep breath. "You'll never believe it."

"Try me."

Another deep breath. And then a small laugh of credulity. Then a serious whisper, "I used to work for the CIA."

Charlie just sits. The information washes over him like he's a stone in a river. He doesn't move for the longest time while Sugar's stomach rolls and tightens. Finally, he gets up. Walks to the hallway closet and pulls out a suitcase.

Sugar sobs, "I knew you would never believe me."

She stays on the couch. We can hear him in the bedroom, emptying the drawers of clothes into the suitcase.

Then Charlie is before her with the chaotically stuffed suitcase in hand.

"Out."

She refuses to move.

"Out now!"

She shakes her head. He puts down the suitcase. Grabs hold of her arm. She clings to the couch. He pulls and tugs at her body. Then he's slapping her hands away. She lets go of the couch and clings onto him. Wraps herself around him with everything she has and plants kisses up and down his neck. I can taste his salty tears while Charlie struggles to detangle her from his body.

They collapse onto the couch and Charlie stops struggling. "I need you to go," he whimpers.

"I'm not leaving you. I did work for the CIA and I'll prove it. You have to let me prove it to you. You have to give me the chance."

"Yeah, how? How are you going to prove it." I feel his body shifting. Letting go. He is too worn out to continue fighting her.

Sugar looks into his eyes. She doesn't have the faintest idea.

[Deleted]

I wake up to rough hands grabbing me. They are attached to ruddy arms with blond woolly hair. I stare up at Hunter's fierce face, and it takes me a moment to realize I'm not in Sugar's body. I'm in Frankie's. And this is the hotel room I will die from.

I struggle against Hunter as he raises a billy club over my head. Then all I see are stars. I stop struggling and my body goes limp. I can feel Hunter wrap the sheets around me, set me on the floor and drag me over to the window.

I hear him smashing the pane of the window with the billy club as the blood from my temple gushes onto the sheets. Yes this is the way it was, the way it really was. The way I was really murdered, and I feel some satisfaction in knowing that I remembered the truth about it, resisting the lies they had inserted in me before.

Then Hunter is hoisting me up, poisoning my body before the fresh open air. Up and out and falling once again.

[Deleted]

On the way to the Doc today, I was remembering what it felt like to have Charlie kiss Sugar, and how his kisses were sweet and true and soft and warm and not like Hunter's at all. But those kisses were never meant for my lips.

I looked over at Fill lumbering beside me and wondered aloud, "Did you ever kiss Eve the way you kissed me?"

"Jesus, what kind of monkey ass-fucking pervert do you make me for?" Fill cried.

I stared obliquely back at him. "I dunno," I shrugged, "The regular kind I guess."

He guffawed at that and then grinned, almost like he was proud of me somehow, and retorted, "Touché."

The wheels in my mind were grinding though. He hadn't molested Eve like he had me. Why? Because he is not a sicko? Because he was not attracted to her? Why single out me then? If he is not a pervert, what is he to me? Either his kisses were a violation, an abuse, or...what - a habit? If they were an abuse, he would have readily assaulted Eve as well. But he didn't...so...it had to mean something, didn't it?

My mind filled with the image of Fill grabbing me, pushing me against the wall and kissing me forcefully with a mouth full of grit and teeth.

His thick sour tongue curdling in my mouth.

I began to retch.

Fill raised an eyebrow at me in concern.

I tried to banish the image from my mind. But the taste of him lingered in my mouth and I wondered at how it got there.

[Deleted]

Am I haunting them? Or are they haunting me? If I die, will they all finally be at peace?

I'm seeing their memories even while I'm awake now.

Or maybe I'm still asleep.

[Deleted]

Today, the Doc said, "You seemed agitated. What seems to be the problem?"

"I just need a fucking cigarette," I snapped.

The Doc registered surprise and then started to rifle through his papers on his desk, "I recall that your file listed you as a non-smoker."

"It's the dreams of Sugar. I just get these terrible cravings afterwards."

"How interesting. And have you had any other cravings? Since the dreams?"

I could sense Fill shuffling his feet in the hall. His back leaning beside the door frame. "No," I said. "So, can I?"

"Hmm. Okay, but please report in your journal anything that comes up as a result of this."

Next thing I knew, I was standing on a grassy field, hemmed in by barbed wire, next to a parking lot full of black SUV's. I tried to make out the sign at the front of the decrepit industrial/concrete complex but it was too far away. I had assumed I was in some sort of hospital, but now I was unsure. Everything about the place was overgrown. Decayed. Forgotten.

Fill went to hand me a cigarette and a light when our guard, dressed in padded black, instructed Fill to light it for me instead and then hold the smoke to my lips.

"Are you fucking kidding me?" Fill said. But the man in black replied, "A lit cigarette could be used as a dangerous weapon."

Fill scoffed but lit the cigarette and held it to my lips anyways. When I made him wipe the filter off where his mouth had just been, he rolled his eyes. All too knowingly.

I took a long slow drag, just the way I remembered Sugar doing it. "Is that the taste of freedom?" he asked.

I took a few steps from him and said, "No, this is," and then twirled on the grass with my face held up at the sun.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you," he warned, but it was already too late.

"Ugh, dizzy." I cried. Light-headed, I flopped down on the soft warm grass.

Fill crouched down beside me, and offered me another drag. "Not quite the same as smoking in your sleep, now is it?"

I curled my fingers around the blades of grass and looked up at the bright blue sky. I had felt the sun on my face in my dreams, but I had forgotten how good it really felt. It is so much better living my life than those of others. I closed my eyes and felt the sun kiss each of my eyelids.

"Last drag, Del," Fill prodded the cigarette toward me but I declined, not wanting to push my luck.

Sing-song, the guard cautioned Fill, "Giving it a name will only make it harder in the end."

"Relax," Fill snapped, taking the last drag himself. "When it's time to toss the kitten in the sack, I'll even supply the rocks." He flicked the butt, stood up and started back inside.

I lied there stunned.

Do you think I'm stupid, that I don't know what you mean? Or are you just counting on me forgetting?

Or are you counting on me remembering?

[Deleted]

I am sitting on a leather couch beside Sugar, half inside, half outside of her again. Her eyes are strange and glassy. We are in a small dark blue office with the blinds closed. The large wheels of audio tape that sit on top of a boxy tape-recorder spin slowly. There are plaques on the wall. I catch words on them like: Doctor, Psychiatry, Association.

Charlie is there, looking worn and thin in a large wine-colored leather armchair opposite to us. Another man, fragile, aged, grey haired with spectacles, sits behind a desk and takes notes while Sugar counts backwards in a monotone voice. He is a shrunken squirrel of a man in a suit a too large for him, but one supposes fitted him at some point.

Finally Sugar counts to: one.

"Now, Mrs. Burke. I'm going to ask you a series of questions. Please answer them honestly. First of all, please state your name into the microphone."

Charlie impatiently intercedes before Sugar can answer. "I already know her name," he whispers, "Ask her something I don't already know."

The man raises one hand to calm Charlie and says, under his breath, "It's a standard question in cases like these. You see—"

"Sugar." Sugar drones, her Brooklyn accent revived.

The man turns toward her and smiles. "What was that you said?"

"Sugar."

The man shifts uncomfortably in his chair. "I was asking you what your name was and you replied..."

"Sugar."

Charlie groans in exasperation. "This is useless."

"Oh, I see." the man smiles, vindicated, "And what's your last name, my dear?"

"Garcia."

Charlie looks up at the Doctor, and sits up.

"So you are Sugar Garcia?"

"Yes"

"And where were you born, Sugar?"

"Brooklyn."

"Do you know who Maddy is?"

"Yes. Maddy is married to Charlie."

"And who is Charlie?"

"Oh, Charlie's a dreamboat."

One corner of Charlie's mouth upturns in the slightest smile, making him look suddenly his age again: youthful and vibrant.

"So you like Charlie then?"

"Oh yes. He's wonderful. He's not like Hunter at all."

"I'm sorry, did you say Charlie was a hunter?"

"No. I said he is not like Hunter. Maddy must keep Hunter away from Charlie, or he'll kill him with his bare teeth."

Charlie shifts uncomfortably in his seat.

"Tell me more about this Hunter. Where is he from?"

"Everywhere."

"And who does he work for? What does he do?"

"He works for Uncle Sam. He kills and pimps, mostly."

"And who do you work for?"

"Same. Uncle Sam."

"Just to be sure, Sugar: who is Uncle Sam precisely?"

Sugar giggles, "My pimp."

Charlie shakes his head. "Okay, enough's enough. Stop it now," he orders.

The man looks at Charlie and speaks with a low measured voice, "Perhaps what you fear is not that this procedure is of no use, but that it is of use and we will uncover things best left forgotten. Your wife assured me she wanted you to hear the truth, whether or not she was prepared to say it to you directly or you were prepared to hear it. It may be better if you absented yourself. But your wife wants to get down to the bottom of this."

Charlie stirs in his seat and while he does so I can't help thinking that I like Charlie, and I realize I like Sugar as well. And I like them together, what little I've seen of them. I wish I could keep them that way.

Finally, Charlie melts back into his seat and says, "Continue," and I smile. Because I've decided to help them.

[Deleted]

Perhaps this is all a chess game and I'm to play all the pieces, lining them up to protect the Queen. If I can control Sugar, if I can control Frank, if I can control Hunter, and the others, maybe I can change, no control, history. I can make happen what I want to happen. Each dream is a leap into time. I'm travelling through time for a purpose. And Logos is sending me back each time he accepts my sin offerings in ink.

I think I can control Sugar. She will be the easy one. Hunter will be hard though. Maybe impossible.

[Deleted]

I'm in the turquoise kitchen again with Sugar and the phone is ringing. As Sugar crosses over the room, I brace myself. This time I'm prepared.

The voice on the phone says: "Is that you, Eden?" and I can feel Sugar slipping away. Now's my chance. I step in before the resident can take its place. I feel it block against me. Try to feel around the edges, but I don't give it any room to move in.

Before the voice can give instructions, I tell it, "Do not call me again. I'm no longer under your control. I'm cured of you. So you see: it's of no use." My voice sounds strange in Sugar's throat and I feel elated in finally being able to muster control of her body. If I can take control of Sugar's body like this, maybe I really can change her future.

I wait for the voice on the other end to respond but only hear a click and the dial tone instead.

I'm proud of myself so I told Fill. "I can control history you know. I can make a difference in their lives."

He looked at me with large sad eyes, "Can you make a difference in your life?"

"No," I replied. "That's up to the person who is holding my memories captive in them."

He grabbed my arm and looked me square in the eyes. "What if I hold your memories then?"

"Do you?" I gasped, hoping it was true. Not because I wanted Fill to have them, but because it would make me one step nearer to myself.

Fill shook his head and said, "Don't be so dumb. I was speaking rhetorically."

And then I pouted because he always knows how to make me feel like such a child.

[Deleted]

I'm on a strange bus painted in numerous swirling colors, only the colors are so unreal, so intense, so vivid. The bus is full of people, singing, laughing. Someone's playing a tambourine. Another a flute. I feel a part of them somehow. Like we are one giant organism with the bus, and the bus is love and we are love. In the reflection of the window, I see the broad bridge of my nose and I am clapping. And I wonder, how can I be in a body separate to myself, yet feel everyone around me as if I am part of them also.

[Deleted]

Charlie and I are in the ochre and mustard living room again, only now it is day.

"It's a three hour drive until we meet Senator Church. Perhaps you should nap on the way," Charlie suggests as he packs a box of tape recordings, all labeled by date, into a briefcase.

"No," I firmly reply. And this time it is really me speaking. Charlie knits his brows at me; I begin to worry he can hear the difference in my voice to Sugar's and that I will be found out for taking his wife's body hostage. But then I banish the silly thought. What could he even do to me if he suspected?

"I need to be alert," I explain. "In fact, why don't you let me drive. The distraction will relieve my mind from anxiety."

Charlie seems to accept this. He finishes packing, and then smiles. I study his face. He looks grim. But the fondness for Sugar hasn't left his expression entirely.

"This is it," he says, "It's almost over."

I nod, and then we walk out the door into the bright sun.

[Deleted]

I'm at a lake, standing inside the cool water. The sky is bright and clear. The lake stretches out in front of me for miles. Behind is a small dark oak cabin and a short pier made of sienna painted planks.

I hold a small young blonde boy at my hairy and wiry chest. His small feet paddle in the water before me and he giggles. I look down at him and smile.

To my right, my wife floats on her back in a polka-dot bathing suit. Her head bobs, and she smiles, "Are you going to continue with it?" she asks.

My fingers dip into the water and I splash back up at the little boy. He laughs and I laugh. And then I say, "I've got to. I've got no choice. I took an oath. Besides...We stand on the right side of history. The side of good. As long as we continue to fight the good fight, I have no choice but to soldier on."

My wife treads water around us and then smiles. "My steadfast tin soldier," she says and then dips her face into the water, blowing bubbles for the boisterous boy in my arms.

Does this mean I've already changed history? And Frankie doesn't die? Or is this another memory, from before my murder.

[Deleted]

I woke up to the lights flickering on and off. I asked Fill about it when he arrived to take me for my shower.

"Oh, that! It's just some little ole' hurricane. Don't be worrying your precious head over it." Then he laughed at the irony of me taking a shower. "We'll all be wet soon enough," he said grimly.

"Should I scrub between my toes?" I asked him.

He looks at me deadpan in the face and said, "Always."

The Doc then had me brought round to his office to scold, "You haven't been writing in your journal."

"My what?" I asked.

"Logos," he replied. He pronounced it as *Low goce*, which I find funny as I've been calling it *Lawgaws* in my head.

I shrugged.

The Doc looked at me sternly and said, "Need I remind you that according to the contract you've signed with us, you agreed to be compliant on this point."

The rat bolted up in my belly and my mind flashed to me, sitting at this desk before, wearing jeans and a blouse, and a pen in hand. Waves of nausea swept over me while I remembered smiling at the Doc's reassuring face as I pointed the tip of my pen to the dotted line where I was supposed to sign my name. I was so close to remembering it.

"Well," the Doc said now in the here and present (wherever that is), and the memory jumped out of view. I swallowed as the panic subsided but at the same time felt satisfaction.

I remembered. A real genuine memory. Perhaps this mean more would follow.

"I have nothing to write about," I replied.

"Well," he pursed his lips together, "Write about that." I didn't respond and he let me go. In the hallway, Fill hissed at me that I better do as I'm told if I know what's good for me.

Back in my room, I found a pack of cards with two Jokers: a black one and a red one. And so I began to play.

[Deleted]

Everything I touch is covered in blood and I can't stop shaking.

A man burst into my room today while I was asleep. I woke up to him grabbing me so I fought him back with everything I had. We struggled for some time in the dark because his hands were sweaty, so I kept slipping out of his grip. Finally, he pinned me down and smothered my mouth with his hand. I still feel where the point of his knee bruised into my thigh.

He grunted his hot breath into my ear, "We have NO TIME for this." A deep breath, then, in a solid steady voice, "I'm going to let you go, and when you do, you either follow me to get the hell out of here, or you take your chances with Veil. Your choice."

Then suddenly he slid off of me, and I could hear his footsteps trail away into the pitch black hallway. I felt excruciatingly terrified of the dark so I followed him. When I caught up, he put my arm in his and we stumbled through the blackness. I could hear pandemonium in the distance, and a low rumbling noise. The voices and shouting got louder, so the man pushed me through a door where it was even darker than before. I started to tremble and whimper and claw at myself. "Hold on, hold on," he hushed, and he pulled out a lighter and flicked it open. My eyes steadied on the flame while he looked around the cramped supply closet (I assume by the looks of it). The man found what he was looking for and laid towels on the floor and crammed them where the door met the floor. Then he turned on a small portable light and shone it dimly in our faces. I could see his piercings reflect in the light.

I recognized his face but I can't recollect from where. He seemed anxious, unnerved, but his first concern was to ask how I was. He told me his plan: how we'd wait until the coast was clear, and then make a break for it to the 'lucky escape pod' he had waiting out back.

"I sure hope you can swim," he said. "We're taking a huge risk, but a chance like this doesn't come by often. The bots will assume we've gone missing, or are dead. They'll never even come looking. If we survive that is."

We waited for a long time. Each time we thought the voices had subsided they reappeared. The low rumbling had escalated into a high-pitched howl, and I couldn't hear myself think. The man kept glancing over at me. It seemed like he had a lot to say, but didn't know where to begin.

Finally, he swallowed and said, "You don't remember me at all, do you?"

"Should I?" I asked.

"Nah. A girl like you wouldn't remember a guy like me, even if you did remember."

I'm not sure what he meant but I felt sad for him. And then I did something quite bizarre for a reason I can't understand. I pointed towards his chest, and when he looked down at it, I took the side of my finger and flicked it along the underside of his nose.

We both smiled, and I thought he was pleased. I felt pleased too for some strange reason. He then said, it's time to go and we left the room. For a long time, we walked, evading the voices. Finally, as we walked, we could see it get lighter and lighter ahead. The man picked up the pace.

"We're almost there," he said.

I stopped though. I wasn't not sure if I wanted to continue. To leave. I'm supposed to be here. I deserve to be here. I have to pay the price.

"Come on," he urged, but I froze and shook my head. He grabbed me by the hand and began to pull. I cried out, and then he wrapped his hot hands around my mouth again.

"What's going on here," a burly voice barked. We looked over at man dressed all in padded black. He held a rifle at us and crouched forward. Behind him, was a man dressed in a white lab coat with a silver fringe of hair around his head.

The man that held me straightened and coughed, "I'm escorting the patient—"

"No, you're not," the man in black replied and I heard a loud pop, and then a gush of blood splattered all over my face and torso. The man that had held me sank strangely to the floor. And I screamed, "No, no, no, no." I don't know why but I fell to the floor and clung onto him.

As they dragged me away from the man's body by my feet, I left a trail of his blood behind. Soon after, they shoved me in here, in the dark, where I just screamed and screamed and clawed.

Then the lights came back on and I found this book and a glass of water.

I woke up today covered in dry blood. No one has come since I woke up and I've been up long enough to have read Logos and to know that Fill is dead.

If I hadn't deserved this hell before, I deserve it now.

[Deleted]

Today, I woke up as if nothing had happened. The sheets were fresh. My jumper clean. I didn't know anything should be wrong until I read about Fill's death and remembered.

I know that on some level I should feel sad, that he was the closest thing to a friend I had currently, and before that...well...i don't know...but all I feel is cold and numb.

And different somehow. Like I'm floating out of my body, like something is pushing me out. The way I felt when the resident took over Sugar's body. But who is trying to occupy me now, I can't say.

Looking down at my feet just now, I noticed where they missed cleaning some blood between my big and middle toes. When I went to clean it myself, I realized it wasn't blood but a letter written in red. And then I examine the insides of all my toes. On each side there is a letter. Altogether they spell:

st ay aw ak et on ig ht

I wish I knew what it meant and why it was there.

[Deleted]

A large awkward microphone is pushed towards me on the table that I am seated before. Beyond, I can see a giant camera with a red light on top. Hot lights bear down on top of me, and I can feel a trickle of sweat form on my brow. I vaguely can make out the form of an audience seated in escalating rows behind the cameras.

I look down and see I'm wearing a cream-colored uniform bordering mocha-colored wrists.

"And you say you were brainwashed?" a voice says. I look up, and it is a white man dressed in a suit, his black helmet-shaped hair swept to one side.

"Yes. That is correct. We never used biological weapons on the civilians of Korea but we were made to believe it overtime," I find myself lying into the mike.

"Believe it, how?" the man presses.

"Torture. Deprivation. Coercion. They have their ways." I reply.

[Deleted]

This morning Sugar told me Fill was dead. I wasn't sure before. I had hoped he was alive somehow, but she convinced me that I'm wrong. We talked for several hours, so I didn't have time to write to you. I don't think I want to anymore as the leviathan is seeking to destroy me by eating my all my words. So I'll hold them in my throat where they can't get at them.

[Deleted]

Maybe I can save Fill. I can change history. All I need to do is what I did for the others. Change my memory of him...

[Ctrl] [Deleted]

All my dreams are Hunter's now. I don't wish to write about them.

I don't even try to stop him now.

[Ctrl] [Delete]

Dear Logos,

I'm having new memories now. Maybe they are even mine, but who's to say. There are so many of them. And they take up so much space that I now write them on the walls instead. Sometimes Frankie helps me. He is clever that way. And I don't want to write them here, as I fear they will redact any mention of myself like they have before.

[Ctrl] [Delet]

Dear Logos,

I wanted to tell you Logos that I've had a memory of Fill. I felt I had to share it with you because you knew him as well as I did. And I think it's safe if they have it - there's not much in it to begin with.

I was facing a field at the edge of a parking lot when I heard a voice call out, "Hey, Del!" and spun around. I must have been walking towards the sun because when I turn around I see Fill, standing afar from me over by a red pickup truck, and shielding the sun from his eyes. For once, he doesn't wear white. And he looks younger. Less pierced. No Samson tattoo. We are in a parking lot of a rundown small town grocery store. He holds his arm up and waves, and I salute back at him. Then I face the sun again and walk towards the field, feeling my long hair hit my back between my shoulder blades.

[Ctrl] [Dele]

Dear Logos,

I'm hardly here anymore. They've taken over and I've let them loose. I don't know what they do when I'm not around, but I can see what they've left behind written on the walls and floors.

[Ctrl] [Alt] [Del]

[Alt]

[Alt]

[Alt]

[Alt]

[Alt]

[Marginalia: Alt]

Dear Logos,

Sugar and Frank woke me up today. They said it was time for me to go. It's okay, they will help me and then I will never have to remember anything ever again. They are lying on the floor now, where I have penned them into the flesh. They wait for me to crawl in between them after I say goodbye to you.

They will sing me to sleep. One of Fill's songs. And then she will finally arrive and they'll all go out to greet her.

They've told me my name. Whispered it in my ear and told me what it means.

I am Cassandra. And it is time for me to close my eyes.

Yours All Ways,

Del.