

The Noxious and the Daemon Flower

Re-Vamped Edition.

Written by Raven

Artwork by Laëmas

Revised by Pandora

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foreword

Since the Aube Noire, our relation to Language & Spectacle could be accounted as a *paradoxal* and fairly destructive love affair. Shamelessly put, Art is not revolutionary; it is a contemplative craft, subversive distraction at best.... Hence, we can't pretend that *it* lives, yet we chose to laud the unliving, wherefore this piece presents itself without presentation – we'll apologize for naught, nor will we answer for our oeuvre. *The Noxious and the Daemon Flower* speaks and bleeds for itself.

Aye, it was built with many layers of frustrate intent and, to tell the truth, we can't really hope (ah, hope!?) that it will be fully understood, even by the radicals whom we league so with. Shallow, simpler works have certainly deluded the world moreso: ignorance appeals more than aesthetical deconstruction. That is well understood. Albeit, *any cynic may well conceive our design*, and in this irremediable belief – alone – do we find content, that and a semblance of reconciliation within the Dark.

In retrospect, we stand indifferently.

In feral & infectious Anarchy,

Raven, Laëmas & Pandora

Montreal, 03.2007

undead undead undead

Preludium



Schadenfreude



Preludium

—

Schadenfreude

My life is only my life. Doubtless you will
slay me, when I am done with my tale.
But you cannot erase my pain, or stifle my
yearning – or avoid the cost.

- Stephen R. Donaldson

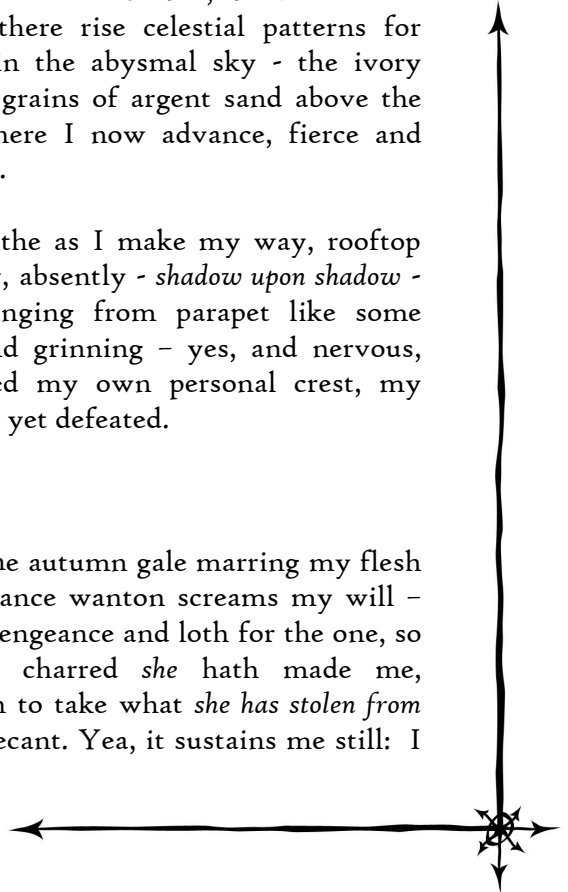
November drapes me in dark vestments, now that the
witching hour approaches there rise celestial patterns for
mine eyes to see, solemn in the abysmal sky - the ivory
scythe and the starflowers, grains of argent sand above the
numb mechanical Maze where I now advance, fierce and
insane, to enact my final jest.

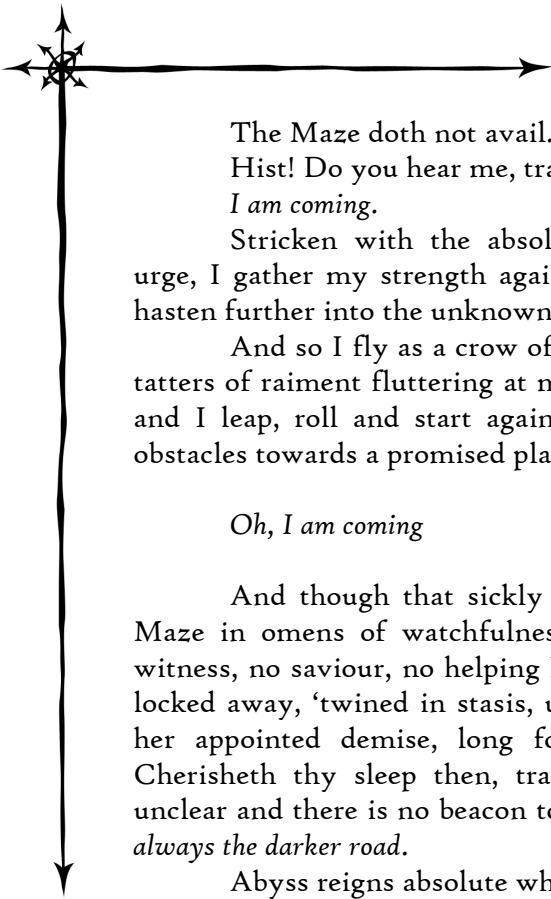
Almost -

Footsteps soft and lithe as I make my way, rooftop
upon rooftop... vying slowly, absently - *shadow upon shadow* -
leaping atop chimney, swinging from parapet like some
malicious imp - winged and grinning - yes, and nervous,
though I may have reached my own personal crest, my
absolute *trionphe* and am not yet defeated.

A cruel wind blows

Tears fill my eyes, the autumn gale marring my flesh
without relent whilst vengeance wanton screams my will -
yes, it can not be stopped. Vengeance and loth for the one, so
scathed and bleeding and charred *she* hath made me,
wherefore have I risen forth to take what *she has stolen from*
us. Retribution. I shall not recant. Yea, it sustains me still: I
mustn't fail.





The Maze doth not avail.
Hist! Do you hear me, traitor?
I am coming.

Stricken with the absolute bliss of my murderous urge, I gather my strength against the endless distance and hasten further into the unknown.

And so I fly as a crow of murder, concealed by night, tatters of raiment fluttering at my hind like raven feathers – and I leap, roll and start again, onward through countless obstacles towards a promised place and a promised time.

Oh, I am coming

And though that sickly orange lighting shrouds the Maze in omens of watchfulness, I know there can be no witness, no saviour, no helping hand, *she is despairingly alone*: locked away, ‘twined in stasis, unaware that this night hath her appointed demise, long foretold but ignored by all. Cherisheth thy sleep then, traitor? Hearken! The way is unclear and there is no beacon to light my way, but *mine was always the darker road*.

Abyss reigns absolute whence I rise.

And here, *hither!* It stands brute and cold, this Maze, this labyrinth of sort – the awkward picture-imperfect metropolis for whom ere yester’ eve I hath bled my very last droplet of humanity. Surrounded! Ineffable! Skyscrapers outline this luminous *château-fort* in every direction, bent over shapeless boulevards like the grey veins of some dead creature. But let there be no inch of a doubt, no inkling of a fucken afterthought: we are doomed and we are trapped and there is no probable way out.

Yet somehow, I must get through to *her*.

And here, wait, lo and behold! On a turning of ceiling and crusty pitch wall, the dwelling of the one revealed: this rigid, blunt building lost in a sea of selfsame constructions. Warped in the orange lighting it looms high over the slum streets and trash dumpsters, the broken-down cars, the traffic lights. And now it stands but a stone’s throw from my position! Ah! I can see it in the distance: the old brick, the

pinkish paint, yellow pinions, shanty frames, rusted railings – all there in good sooth – and I laugh, snarling at the moon sickle and stopping a while to recollect my wounded self before the final jump.

The taste of blood on my lips

All is still.

Panting heavily, trembling with glee, I rest my flesh upon a low dais, catching my breath for a minute's peace. Contemplating the horrid visage of the Maze – all around – I remember the reason I am here. Do you hear, traitor? The very fucken brutal *reason* I have come forth at last... though you know it not. For if vanity hath plagued your bitter darkness to a pure, bright sun, then I am the coming eclipse, and *you will answer to me*. But will you still be there? Won't you stay and meet me thence, you pathetic sot?

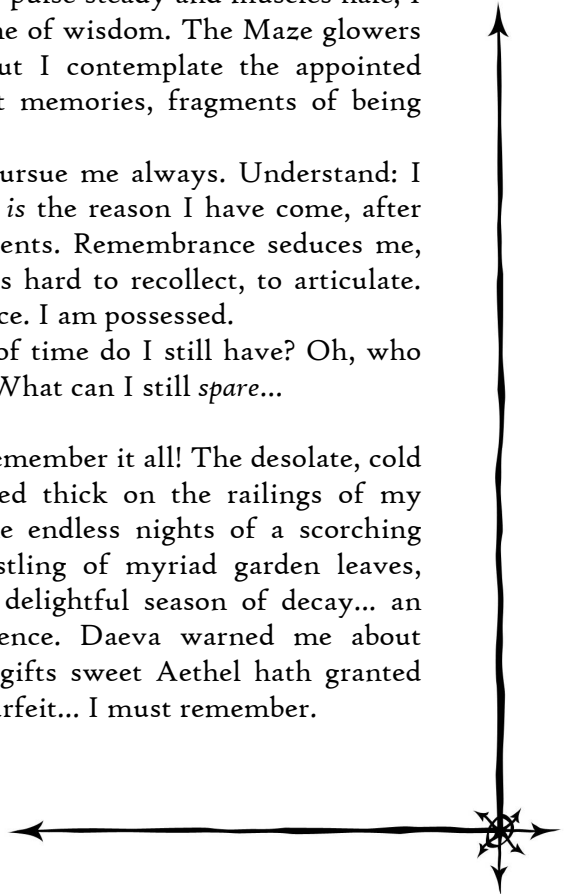
... sat and calm, now, pulse steady and muscles hale, I look into the moon for a tithe of wisdom. The Maze glowers disgust into the heavens but I contemplate the appointed hour, thoughts drifting past memories, fragments of being that still... haunt me.

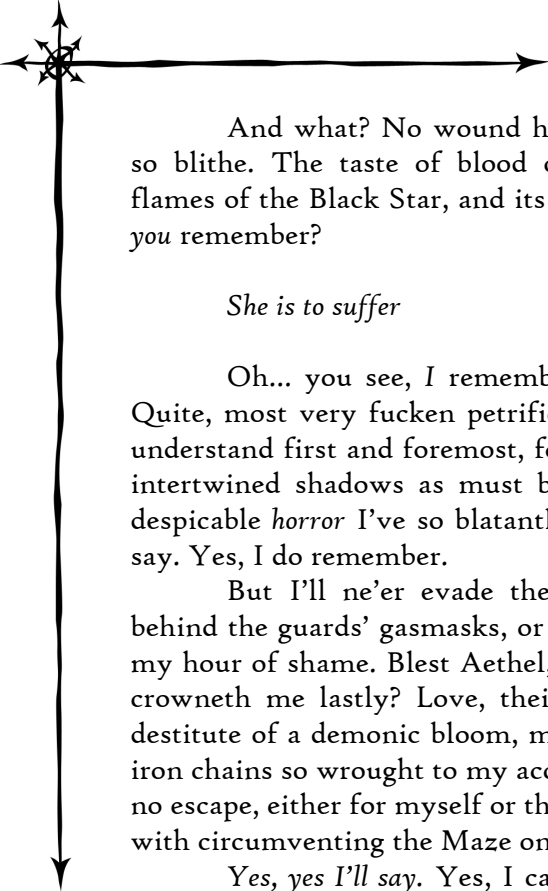
Scents and images pursue me always. Understand: I can not forget. Perhaps this *is* the reason I have come, after all. Tales, moments, fragments. Remembrance seduces me, drives me in trance, yet it is hard to recollect, to articulate. Words never really did suffice. I am possessed.

What little amount of time do I still have? Oh, who will know? Who will hear? What can I still *spare*...

Yes, I'll say.

Yes, I remember. I remember it all! The desolate, cold frost of winter as it rimmed thick on the railings of my Scarlet Fae's dark lair – the endless nights of a scorching summer in lust, or the rustling of myriad garden leaves, turning to gold during the delightful season of decay... an eternity of revolt and absence. Daeva warned me about desiring new gods, yet the gifts sweet Aethel hath granted me cannot evade - can not surfeit... I must remember.





And what? No wound have I not yet taken. So soft, so blithe. The taste of blood on my lips. The oath. The flames of the Black Star, and its promises to keep. Friend, do you remember?

She is to suffer

Oh... you see, I remember it all, hence am I afraid. Quite, most very fucken petrified! Ah! This, this you must understand first and foremost, for my tale spirals down such intertwined shadows as must be acknowledged the sheer... despicable *horror* I've so blatantly endured, so long. Yes, I'll say. Yes, I do remember.

But I'll ne'er evade the Labyrinth, the bleak stare behind the guards' gasmasks, or forget the betrayal that hath my hour of shame. Blest Aethel, wherefore doth thy absence crowneth me lastly? Love, their prisons become me. I am destitute of a demonic bloom, misery'd by ruling winter and iron chains so wrought to my accursed name; no, there can be no escape, either for myself or the traitor, but I'll stay content with circumventing the Maze one last night... oh yes!

Yes, yes I'll say. Yes, I can never forfeit the memory, or the umbral reality of what I have become. But *you*, you my friend, will remember also, and I will bequeath to thee the tales so hoarded through my darkest years.

Whispers, perhaps, and a little more.



Noxious Unto The Maze



Noxious unto the Maze

Some say I bite the hand that feeds
-but to these disillusioned eyes
'tis sweet revenge to watch it bleed
it has only fed me lies

- Martin Walkyier

I.

Absent, locked in a spell of impenetrable dusk, hours flittered along the perverse embrace of amnesia. Emptiness cradled me in its lap, transient, whiled from Life by unjust hands.

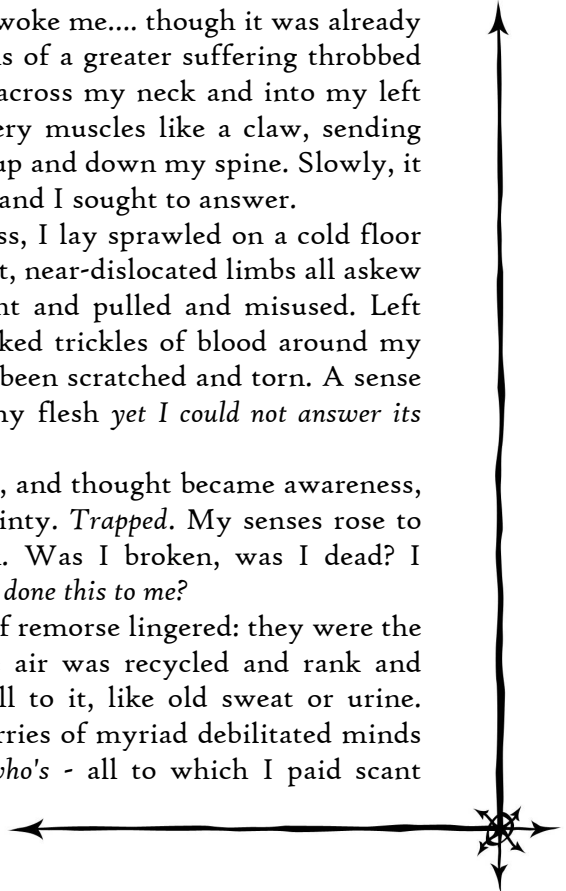
Trapped.


At last, a sharp pain woke me.... though it was already too late. Pulsing, the remains of a greater suffering throbbed from the back of my skull, across my neck and into my left shoulder, gnawing at my very muscles like a claw, sending wave after wave of anguish up and down my spine. Slowly, it sliced my spirit from repose and I sought to answer.

Damned and mindless, I lay sprawled on a cold floor like a ragged doll, thrown out, near-dislocated limbs all askew in improbable positions: bent and pulled and misused. Left temple swollen and blue, caked trickles of blood around my fingers where two nails had been scratched and torn. A sense of urgency hovered about my flesh yet *I could not answer its plea.*

Pain became thought, and thought became awareness, and awareness became certainty. *Trapped.* My senses rose to fling me into being... again. Was I broken, was I dead? I mean, *who the fuck could have done this to me?*

All around, flutters of remorse lingered: they were the stains of a brutal past. The air was recycled and rank and there was an odd sour smell to it, like old sweat or urine. Within it transpired the worries of myriad debilitated minds with *why's* and *how's* and *who's* - all to which I paid scant





heed, considering my own burning interrogations. How long had I been unconscious? Still, silence answered me naught. The ages mocked with knowledge yet I could not recall - could not decipher the cause, the reason, the *meaning*.

This place, I understood, must have been devised for contraption.

Shuddering, scum-cruste eyes gazed open to witness rigid iron bars locking me in, flinching at the sight of those humming, fluorescent tubes fixed in the ceiling. Recoiling in horror at such blinding atrocity, I yelped and winced and wailed:

"Oh, damn -"

But then, from out of nowhere, echoed a hoarse tongue, blurting gleefully:

"Well said, comrade."

No, no! Wait a minute! I though.

Where the fuck am I?

What the fuck is - oh, shit, fucken bloody fuck, fuck -

The voice sounded like some naked seraph hailing me from behind Heaven's gates, light-hearted and gay. It spoke to me like I was the first flower of Spring.

"Hey, it was about time you came to. I mean, I was just reminiscing about the nineteen-seventeen Ukrainian insurrection and I thought you could sort out one or two details for me."

No, wait! Who is this? Why, what... fuck!

Hopelessly, the voice continued.

" - admitting the low probability of a qualitatively intensive radical social upheaval based on a solid revolutionary and near-dogmatic belief system, in retrospect, a socialistic ideology of class-war, bourgeoisie, and *blah blah blah* - "

All Hell, I rasped. Then all of a sudden it hit me, and I could remember... shields and batons - no, wait, there were chants, yes, slogans that spelled something inaccurate - void of meaning - and so compelling, with these eyes everywhere, afraid, angry - and cameras, microphones, tin cans and wooden two-by-fours, and teargas - and mace, tasers, rocks, clashes and spurs... row after row of fucken brutal paint-

stained riot pigs, with their fucken four-digit numbers and their right to assassinate -

Yet as I recalled, my cellmate went on, oblivious.

"Blah blah - all so boring, really, but considering the determining essence of violence, all binding and tragic and pathetic, just wait, I mean, hear this: imagine *inanimate* violence, like walls, basements, and jails - like this very lovely space of confinement we seem to have been spewed into - as a separate, cohesive *entity*, I mean... comrade, I'd like your appreciations on organic revolt and, well basically, my question is: what possible harm can you cause wielding a steel pipe when there's hundreds of Nazis microwaving your brains out with their sort of multimillion credit kafkaian deathrays?"

He paused a while, still in shock.

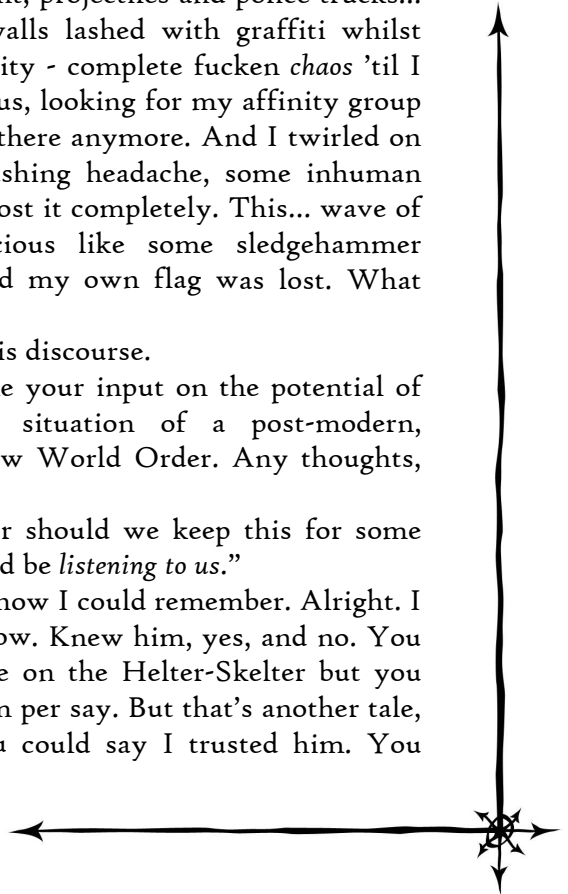
... yeah, it was all coming back to me then, my own mental haze clearing up, I could recall in vision all rumbling: the barricades, the spray paint, projectiles and police trucks... and helicopters, too, and walls lashed with graffiti whilst megaphones screamed insanity - complete fucken *chaos* 'til I found myself lost and anxious, looking for my affinity group and couldn't... they weren't there anymore. And I twirled on and again until I felt a trashing headache, some inhuman pulsing whistle, and then I lost it completely. This... wave of force blunted me unconscious like some sledgehammer rammed into my skull. And my own flag was lost. What happened?

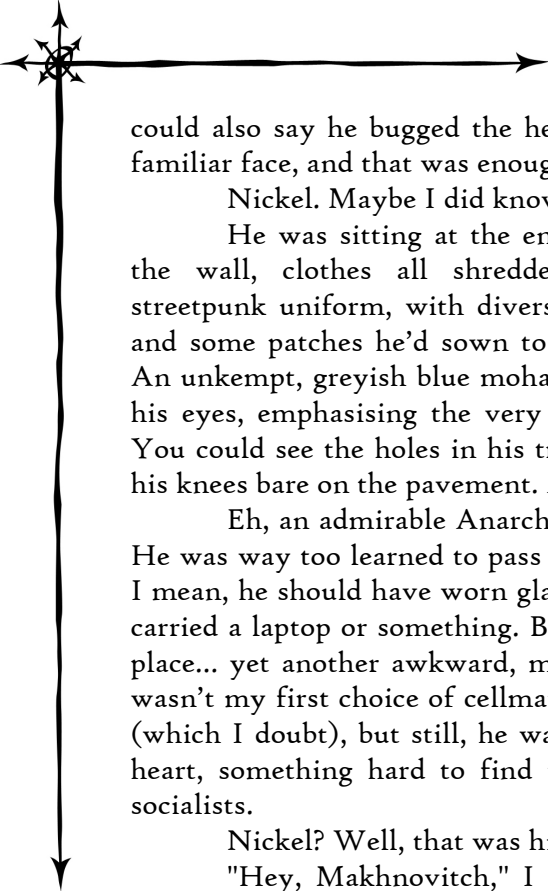
But Nickel kept on his discourse.

"I mean, I'd just like your input on the potential of biological warfare in the situation of a post-modern, totalitarian, Police-State New World Order. Any thoughts, Dim?"

Then he added : "Or should we keep this for some other time? I guess they could be *listening to us*."

Listening to us? Ah, now I could remember. Alright. I guess I knew that noisy fellow. Knew him, yes, and no. You see, you meet lots of people on the Helter-Skelter but you never really get to *know* them per say. But that's another tale, isn't it? As for Nickel, you could say I trusted him. You





could also say he bugged the hell out of me. But he was a familiar face, and that was enough.

Nickel. Maybe I did know him after all.

He was sitting at the end of the room, back against the wall, clothes all shredded and resown like some streetpunk uniform, with diverse militant buttons and pins and some patches he'd sown to his pants with dental floss. An unkempt, greyish blue mohawk fell from his head across his eyes, emphasising the very human wreck he'd become. You could see the holes in his trousers where he'd scratched his knees bare on the pavement. An evil sight, I can tell you.

Eh, an admirable Anarch, this Nickel. What a misfit. He was way too learned to pass off as an actual crusty-punk. I mean, he should have worn glasses and sipped port wine or carried a laptop or something. But he just stood there, out of place... yet another awkward, misplaced rebel. Of course he wasn't my first choice of cellmate, if you know what I mean (which I doubt), but still, he was a good friend with a good heart, something hard to find these days, even for radical socialists.

Nickel? Well, that was his action name anyway.

"Hey, Makhnovitch," I finally replied, half-smiling. "Please stop talking shit. My head hurts."

Apparently, he found this all to be quite entertaining. As he came to examine my scratches he wore this annoying, sarcastic grin, like he was actually *enjoying* seeing me at my worst. The weasel. Well, maybe not my worst.

"Hell," I rasped to Nickel. "What the fuck did they do to us? Did I faint or what?"

My comrade's voice hinted of remorse. He let out a snarl and suddenly became very serious.

"Fucken pigs", he moaned. "How would I know? I did see you fall, though. Only I didn't get the time to figure things out. They pitched that bloody stuff at me too. New crowd-control weapons, I guess. For fuck's sake, they could've killed us all."

Nickel looked around and concluded, like some notorious specialist:

“Yes, we’re in trouble now. This is serious. There could be tens or hundreds of us locked up in here. Who knows? These pigs, I tell ya. Holy Fuck. Or maybe they just took the two of us? Can they even get away with it?”

At which point he started pacing the room to and fro, obviously deluded with the notion that dialectics might actually save us from our tormentors, whispering some unintelligible legal terms like *captivity* and *evidence* and I wonder how long we’ll be here...

Eventually, he looked yonder in the hallway, perhaps for some sign of hope or vengeance or sentiment of living. But who dwelt beyond these endless halls, these rusty gridlocks, if not the architects of our own humiliating demise? Had we been forgotten? How serious was this, in any case? I mean, couldn’t we get legal support of any kind? For fuck’s sake! We’d gotten in deep trouble, yes.

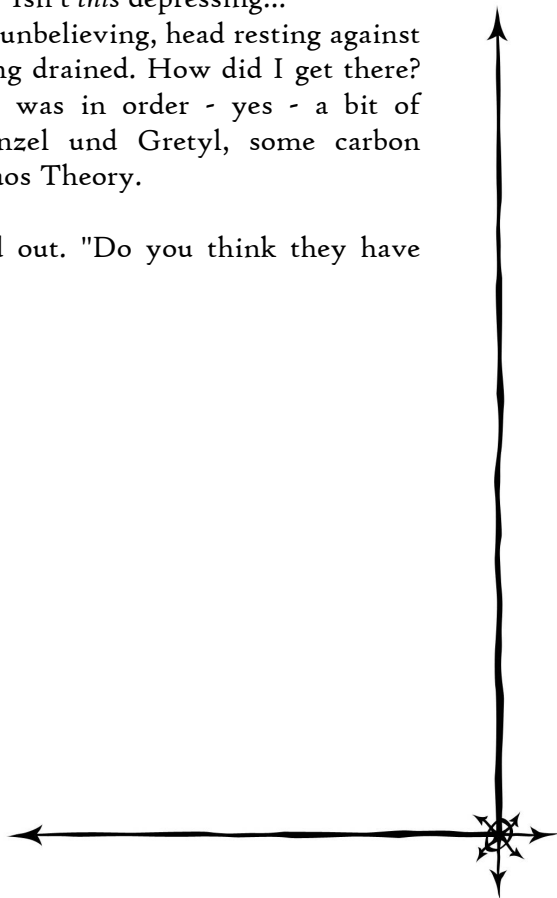
What next?!

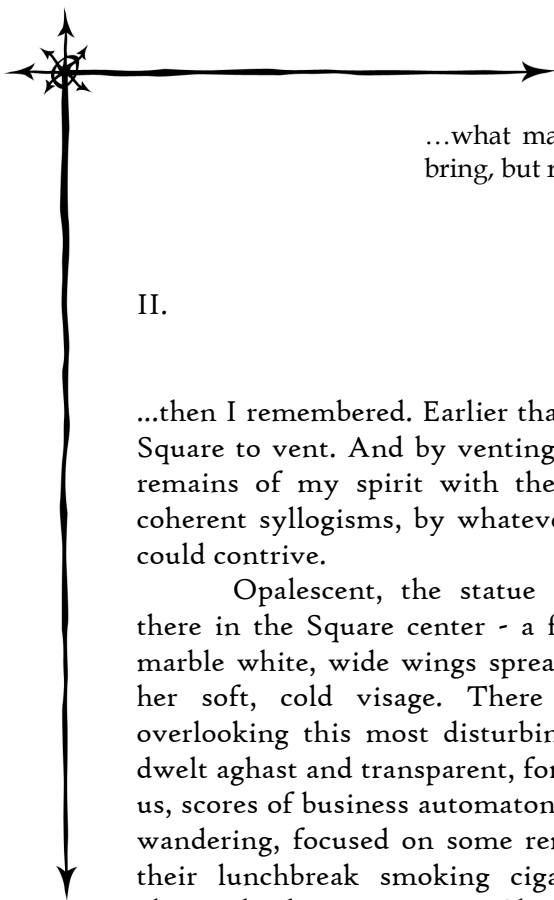
“Eh,” Nickel sighed. “Isn’t *this* depressing...”

And I... I lay aghast, unbelieving, head resting against the cold concrete wall, feeling drained. How did I get there? Perhaps some introspection was in order - yes - a bit of autobiography, a little Hanzel und Gretyl, some carbon fourteen and a lecture in Chaos Theory.

Now *how* the fuck -

"Heck," Nickel cried out. "Do you think they have espressos back there?"





...what matters is not so much what we
bring, but rather, what we put to death.

- Karl Kraus

II.

...then I remembered. Earlier that day I'd gone to the Eastern Square to vent. And by venting, I mean clasping the frayed remains of my spirit with the thin aspiration of shaping coherent syllogisms, by whatever delirious means the morn could contrive.

Opalescent, the statue of Angelique loomed high, there in the Square center - a finely carved vestal angel of marble white, wide wings spread, an air of innocence about her soft, cold visage. There she stood on a pedestal, overlooking this most disturbing park. Here, the homeless dwelt aghast and transparent, forgotten and weak. All around us, scores of business automatons traced their linear patterns, wandering, focused on some remote concern, whiling away their lunchbreak smoking cigarettes, talking on the cell phone, drinking cinnamon Chaï tea in little tiny Styrofoam goblets. Urgh.

I'd laid my black flag at the foot of Angelique, entrusted to her implacable mien for safekeeping. It was my first one, I kinda felt attached to it, feeling sorta proud to lay it alongside my favourite Icon, that lonely wench - so out of place here in the midst of the Maze. She shown with forgotten grace, and like us Anarchs, was all but acknowledged.

Until the appointed hour, I was bent on my insoluble enigma. Eh, September would help me. It befitted this portrait nicely. A chill gale blew, and I welcomed its kiss sweetly, though it numbed my joints. It seemed a fitting set for abstract lore. So I'd settled 'neath Angelique and scattered my papers round me in a half-circle, mostly references and monographs, my Keats book marked on *Sonnet* and the picture of Van Velde's *Parcours Rouge* which - force of habit - always got me working...

Except today.

At the center of my little *bric-à-brac* lay one black fountain pen and one clean white sheet of paper. An absolutely white, virgin, clean and untouched page. Fuck. I needed to write, and if possible, something intelligible. And fast.

And yet I could not.

Discouraged, on the brink of a furious outburst, I laid back, sighed and took a generous swill at my coffee mug - my fifth since the morning - to resign and gaze, silently, at the people going by... daring to be looked back. Nothing to lose, now. I felt so noxious I thought I'd either cough up blood or actually start writing something. Either way, I'd be satisfied.

Damned Helter-Skelter. How come we'd always get into these situations? So cold, then. Tightening my scarf, I breathed on my hands to bring back some life into my fingers. "Ok, all right", I thought. "All right, fuckwits. Let's go."

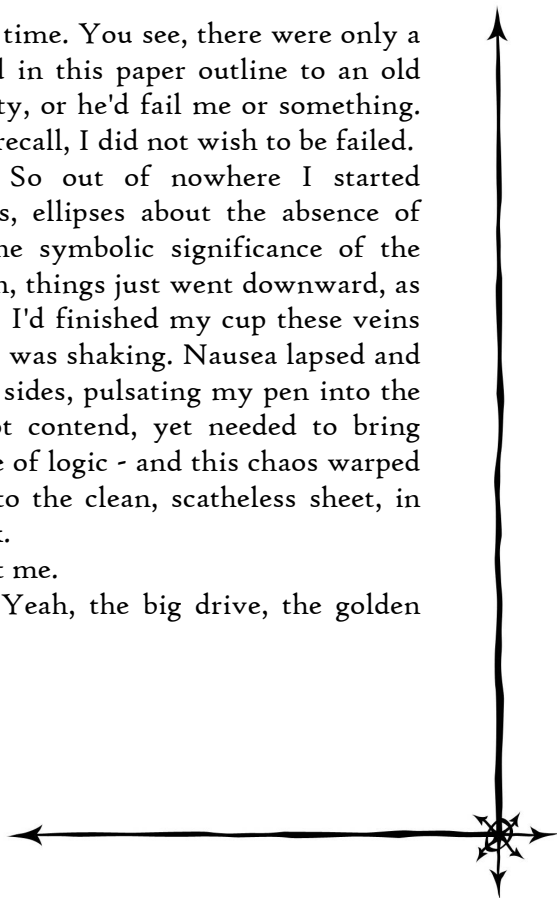
I was running out of time. You see, there were only a couple of hours left to hand in this paper outline to an old Maoist fuck at the University, or he'd fail me or something. And for some reason I can't recall, I did not wish to be failed.


I needed to write. So out of nowhere I started scribbling. Thoughts, details, ellipses about the absence of women philosophers and the symbolic significance of the Luddist movement. There on, things just went downward, as they always do. By the time I'd finished my cup these veins roared aflame and vitriolic. I was shaking. Nausea lapsed and visions assailed me from all sides, pulsating my pen into the warm midday - I could not contend, yet needed to bring form, to utter in a semblance of logic - and this chaos warped me from inside out and unto the clean, scatheless sheet, in great gouts of deep, black ink.

And eventually, it hit me.

"Hope", I thought. "Yeah, the big drive, the golden dream, the motor fuel."

An epiphany of sort.





"All of them. Innate gestures. Ornament grace. Lurk-cry-resume-fry. A *mutatio controversiæ*. Oh, these dumb fucks. I'll burn the world."

And I went on, mainly to divide the structure and form the first draft, with the subtitle:

*Roots of oppression in post-catholic
delusion or how many crosses does
it take to nail a Revolution.*

But the strength of my intoxication subsided as fast as it came, as it always did, and for a second there I lost track of my thoughts. "Too late," I realized. The protest would start soon. No time, no time at all. *Late*, always so fucken late. And so the White Rabbit ran.

A protest, yes. A demonstration. For what, now? How many people? Which demands? Organized by whom? And what about defence? Would there be vegan food, at least? Ah, too late, too late. Let's go.

"Screw this", I muttered.

Forcing down the last droplet of my mug, I packed and got up, leaning on my beloved statue. Details and numbers and rendez-vous points: a million trivial concerns seemed to gang up on me, I twitched and winked them away. Nerves burning, sinews tense.

Let's go, let's go.

My old backpack was tearing up, two safety pins held the fabric together. But it would have to do.

Picture, pen, book: check. Gasmask: check. Spare filters: check. A new red paintcan, two bricks and a bottle of water. Check and re-check.

Finally, I buttoned my coat, hauled up my backpack, clasped my black flag away from Angelique's care, unfurled it timidly and started running into the boulevard.

Another freak in the Maze.

Souls of darkness, dwellers of nightfall
Searching, grasping for timeless breath
Dead is now the art of dreaming
Dreaming is now the art of death

- Marcus Ehlin

III.

"Well, if they do," he went on, "they better gimme some cream to go with." Nickel paused for a while, looking about, then concluded: "there are only so many lows a man can sink to, you know."

He just wouldn't shut up. And my head felt like it was caving in. But why resist, I wondered? Let him speak. Let me hurt. Chaos rules.

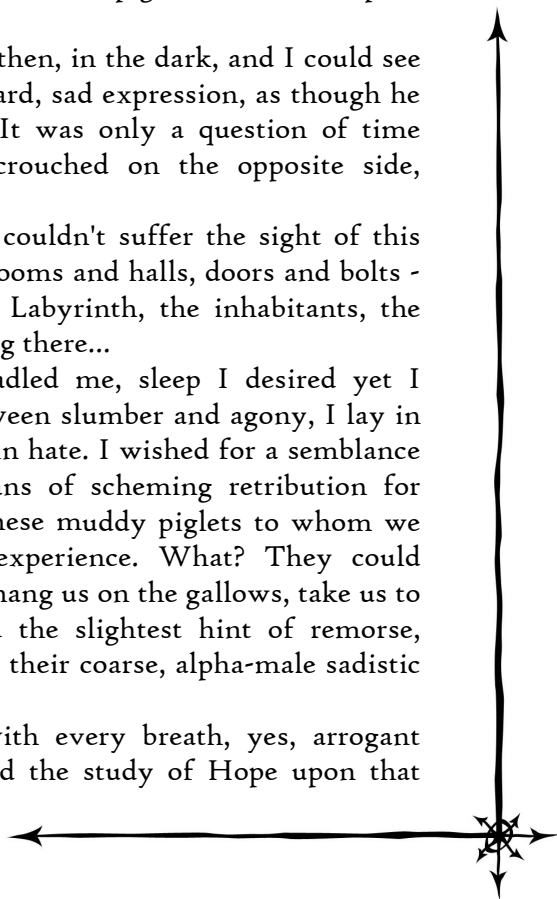
"Better yet", I replied. "Some pig's blood. That'd perk up my evening."


Nickel smiled at me then, in the dark, and I could see him leering back - an awkward, sad expression, as though he regretted being so cynical. It was only a question of time before he fell silent too, crouched on the opposite side, waiting.

My eyes closed... I couldn't suffer the sight of this place. All these buildings - rooms and halls, doors and bolts - and yon, the Maze and its Labyrinth, the inhabitants, the cruel, despicable beings ruling there...

Doleful anthems cradled me, sleep I desired yet I could not rest. Trapped between slumber and agony, I lay in some anaemic state, a trifle in hate. I wished for a semblance of normality, or some means of scheming retribution for these lords of whoredom, these muddy piglets to whom we owed this most heartfelt experience. What? They could plunge us down the sewers, hang us on the gallows, take us to trial. Blast! Would we feel the slightest hint of remorse, then? Would we still grin at their coarse, alpha-male sadistic machismo?

Revenge I craved with every breath, yes, arrogant though I was to have willed the study of Hope upon that





very morning. Angelique was far off now and in this world her light cast but fleeting shadows. I might never see her again. No, we had sunk into deeper stone, me and my comrade. It was cold Horror. This time, Nickel alone shared my solitude, and *he* was a lesser beauty.

Noxious unto the Maze, hours passed and sleep reeled me in... wounded I recoiled, retreating in somnolence, fading to the steady pace of my ache. Between hoarse breaths, lips whispered evil prophecies. The lure of revenge *possessed* me through and through, but it found no release in my blood, no harbour... no clean, crystalline spring. Tainted. Hurt.

A spoiled vessel, seduced and weak, that lay shuddering in the grip of an inextricable disdain - yes, but the waves of anguish did relapse, and by subtle movements alone, hysteria drained into a sort of absent serenity. I felt spent, entombed, cradled in the shadows of this deathly enclosure.

When sleep finally did come, I felt the frozen, velvet darkness of night and fell in love with its touch.

And our faith it will die with the sun
It will lie
Underneath
All will see

- Beth Gibbons

IV.

The computer screen lit the plaster walls with its eerie white glow, punctuated by a tiny blinking cursor. I stared at it dumbly, half awake, while four small speakers pulsed the rhythms of Chiasm into my flesh, pacing me to my duty, dulling my spirit into a steady, altered consciousness where I'd forget hunger, thirst, sleep - all save my purpose - my purpose: to finish this accursed paper and get on with my unlife.

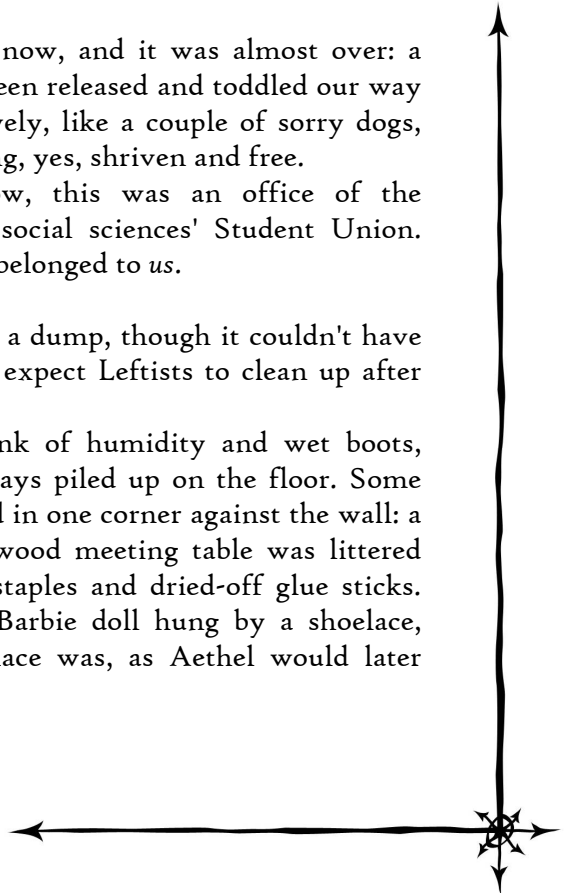
Almost four-o'clock now, and it was almost over: a couple of hours since we'd been released and toddled our way to the University, instinctively, like a couple of sorry dogs, hungry and cold... but smiling, yes, shriven and free.

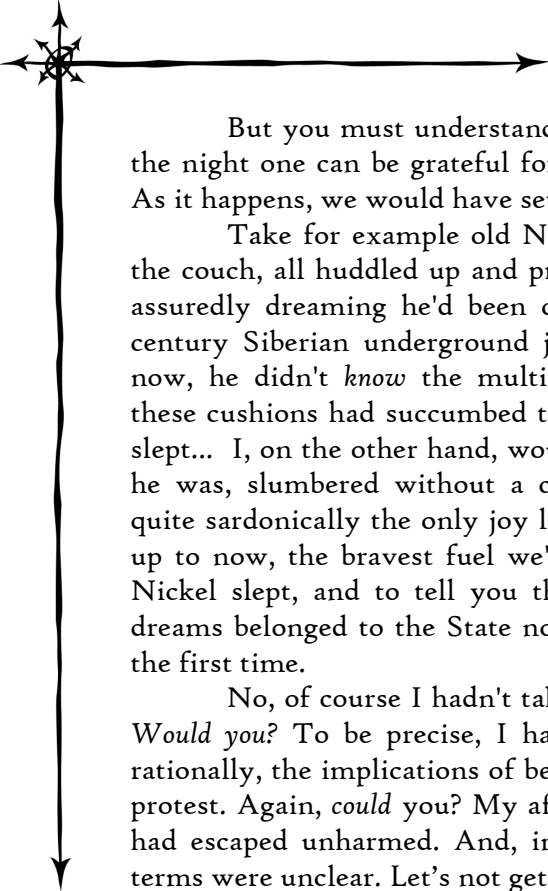
Why here? See now, this was an office of the Executive Committee, the social sciences' Student Union. Did I say Union? I mean, it belonged to us.

And I had a key.

Sure, it was a hell of a dump, though it couldn't have been any other way. Never expect Leftists to clean up after themselves. We are nomads.

Pah. Everything stank of humidity and wet boots, dust and grime. Dirty ashtrays piled up on the floor. Some beer bottles had been stacked in one corner against the wall: a sculpture, I guess. The plywood meeting table was littered with outdated leaflets and staples and dried-off glue sticks. Overhead, a dismembered Barbie doll hung by a shoelace, hair cropped short. This place was, as Aethel would later quote, *impropre*.





But you must understand, now, that in the middle of the night one can be grateful for a sanctuary, *any* sanctuary. As it happens, we would have settled for less.

Take for example old Nickel over there, sleeping on the couch, all huddled up and probably freezing his arse off, assuredly dreaming he'd been cast out in some nineteenth century Siberian underground jail, plotting his escape. See now, he didn't *know* the multitude of graphic defilements these cushions had succumbed to in the past year, and so he slept... I, on the other hand, would not. He, ignorant though he was, slumbered without a care. This example reflected quite sardonically the only joy left to us, this *innocence* - and up to now, the bravest fuel we'd so voraciously burned on. Nickel slept, and to tell you the truth, I envied him. My dreams belonged to the State now. I had been locked up for the first time.

No, of course I hadn't taken it *in* just about then. Ah! *Would you?* To be precise, I hadn't had the time to grasp, rationally, the implications of being arrested during a violent protest. Again, *could you?* My affinity group, as it happened, had escaped unharmed. And, in legal terms, so did I. The terms were unclear. Let's not get technical.

But does it even matter? Oh, no. On the Helter-Skelter, criminal records can be considered as medals, excuses, divine intervention or else. Albeit, their relevance oft pales in comparison to the significance of late papers. This, you could think, is why I eventually found myself typing the night away, sucking on my eighth cup of coffee. Half-dead and indestructible.

There I was. Clickity-click. Forming coherent sophisms (equations based on empty presumptions), twisting concepts into fitting turns, concluding further down - dialectics as a weapon and language as the canvas to be painted on, but a corrupt one at that, yes, fittest for deception. *Argumentum ad hominem*. Who cares what you say, as long as it sounds true? Eh, sometimes I could even deceive myself. But no matter, thoughts drifted and I purged the substance of them into content, form, rationale, until at the end I came to the moment of bliss: the last stabbing

statement, a conclusion in kind – my pun, a cute little wink, the last sentence and sum of all precedent observations : *there is no hope*.

Ah, I didn't believe a word of it. I mean, the format pleased me: it would challenge the authority (and I do mean authority) of my professor. Further more, it would be graded and accepted, because I had respected the norms and the norms needed to be respected. And that was the greatest extent of my liberty as scholar: adept at filtering and annihilating every single notion I was supposed to absorb, to consent... and reproduce. Ah, yes.

There is no hope. That was my riposte. A last page, a last paragraph, and then finished. Saved. Printed. Stapled. Filed. Done. Another worthless piece of knowledge. My blazing victory.

Surfeit on the junk pile of my lore, dizzy and stuffed with such vague notions and cruel evidence, I had done it... and it was *over*.

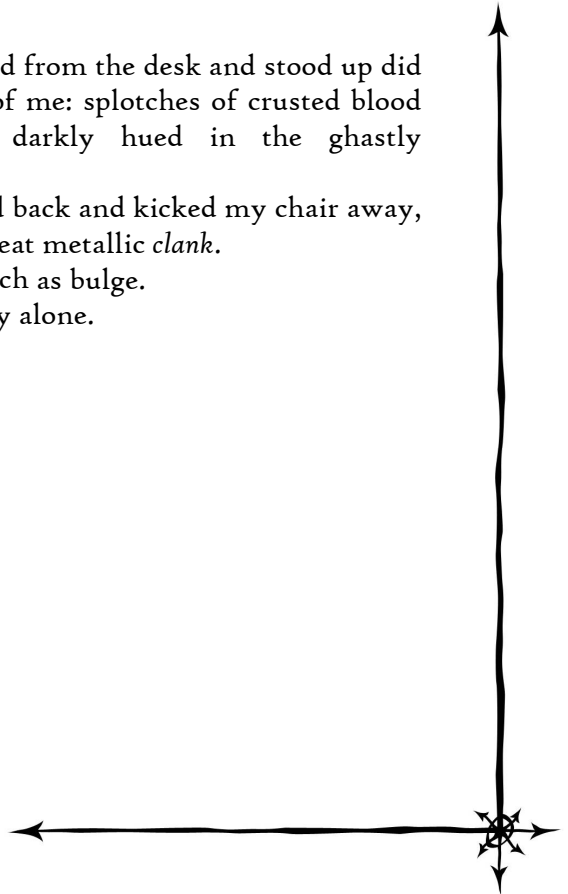
Over.


Only when I retreated from the desk and stood up did I see at last, there in front of me: splotches of crusted blood all across the keyboard, darkly hued in the ghastly screenlight.

Horrified, I stumbled back and kicked my chair away, which tripped over with a great metallic *clank*.

Nickel did not so much as bulge.

Somehow, I was truly alone.





By believing in less, I die further in the shadow of beauty. Thus having nothing that can still bind me to life, also have I nothing which can lead me against her. I began loving life to the pace of dispersing hopes: only when I have nothing more to lose will I become one with her.

- Emil Cioran

V.

Cold and weary, I made my way to the window and leaned against its thick, chill glass. Beyond there rose the archpillars, the web of lights and publicity signs, the luminous towers, the infinite halls of concrete, glowing in taints of black and grey. A prosperous wasteland, my space of confinement.

My two fingers were worse now, swollen with a slight purple tinge, hardly noticeable in the Maze's orange light. Most of the nails had been torn out, the scarlet vitae had poured unto my hand and wrist. *For fuck's sake!*

Sighing, I clasped my hand into a fist, wondering, and I embraced the pain as a sentiment of life. At that moment, that very *instant*, I understood.

I remember it clearly, yes - there, in the cold, dark room at the twelfth story of a concrete tower, at the end of the longest day... looking to the city with a gaze mingled in fright and pure delight.

My eyes, I felt, were finally open.

"A maze," I whispered. "This place, this... Metropolis. A labyrinth for us all. And they, the makers. To find... Daedalus."

All around, circled with walls and barbwire fences, piggies, warthogs and snipers. Had I gone insane? Could my abuse and weariness lead to such hallucinations? How clear, then, did I perceive the blunt, rigid nightmare of the New World Order?

Nickel's words about inanimate violence echoed hoarsely through my head. "Enough," I thought. "Anon! There must be rest, even for the wicked."

Yet *how*, how to simply look away and go back to the way things were before, singing and dancing and hopping about, all merry and gay? Where did all the golden people go? Aren't *they* the stupidest fucks? Ah! Lucidity paints the walls with the blackest pitch! Godless Christians and their saintly sadness would crucify us.

No, the Maze could *never* release me.

There was no certainty of ever feeling healthy again, free of mind and strong in flesh. We were in for the full ride – oh yes – and the Revolution *appealed* to us, purer than the thought of a clean bed or a hearty meal. The Maze never slept. Nor did we. Our voyage, it seemed, would not end.

See, *see*? In a few hours the day would ramble on. Perhaps there was hope, but there was *no* escape. I had to attend one committee meeting, two courses, a work shift and another paper to hand in the next morning. Hours, more hours, an endless road. Courage did not suffice. The White Rabbit ran on.

One day in the life of an Anarch, and I was hurt beyond repair... yet not surprised, nor particularly daunted. Greater horror surely lay in store. Cynics paved the road.

Noxious would I soon forget my name; fucked on this big neon light Helter-Skelter . This was one day, one day alone. And here now, at the end of it all, dawn would rise, and I would see it set forth upon the world – I alone.

This nameless theatre orchestrated all factions beneath my wavering gaze: yes, I could see it then, the skyscrapers, the endless lights, the orange heavens, drowned in stronger tides of blue. In the distance it would rise, this ruddy flame... the fiery orb, swooning into sight to illuminate the Labyrinth... a brand to scar the night over.

Oh rise, nameless one, rise!

...

But did it mean we'd find a way out?

No; it meant we'd grasp the horror in somewhat less subtle themes.

