

UpSyndrome

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ISBN 978-1-4710-2123-7

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Contents

Prologus:	Ctrl Alt Del	1
	Rat//Race	4
	Don't Walk	25
	I ♥ POPE	30
	The Wank Booths	40
	The Wig of Lies	57
	Travelator	67
Epilogus:	F5	73

Prologus

Ctrl Alt Del

They have been playing fancy dress ever since the human mind became suicidal enough to exist beyond instinct. Fondled memories between clerical costumes and withered masks of natural beauty bring me to the great pretender. In the early stages of the new millennium, UpSyndrome made sickly steps out from the alleyways of AIDS and the corridors of Cancer and finally gave up the act. If it wasn't for trillions of lines of code the human race may have finally looked at nothing other than itself. Thankfully, long before this thought ever became a possibility someone coded the software for a privatised installation dedicated to removing the possibility of this threat ever coming to fruition. This would be accomplished through a very inhumane (yet cost effective) process of computerised abortion deletion.

The process that we shall now refer to as Robortion is as calming for its soulless employees as it is for the strange figures that lurk in the shadowy control towers that look more like scratching posts than they do constant reminders of the all seeing eye. Within one decade Big Brother had

already become Obese Brother. Pregnant women were now lined up like animals, waiting for a machine to pierce through their stomachs and all the way into the fetus. The machine would then scan the fetus's brain looking for any infantile genetic dispositions that may someday lead to the child becoming aware of something uncanny. They were lucky on this day, I must have been the third or fourth one they found. My reality tore apart with my birth. Steel plunged into my cavern, taking with it every drop of life. Still attached to my mother I could feel her suffering. After falling out of her I began swinging from left to right like a pendulum on a granddead clock. The twelve o'clock bell was replaced with her drowning screams and then by the silent slice that detached me from the first world that I ever knew. Now, I was falling...

I eventually bounced to a halt atop a cuboid spanning nearly a mile in every dimension. Beneath me lay dead and half wriggling versions of myself. The projected voices of two workmen could be heard floating among us. They were having a very heated argument over whether the cube should be set on fire or crushed first. Protocol allowed for 5mins of argument a day, after this the quieter of the two would immediately be hooked by the neck and brought with all the empty mother units for processing.

Their gateway to heaven had golden arches and promised arterial damage to any of its committed punters. Without competition the remaining worker began the crushing process. Whilst drowning in the pulp of my brothers and sisters the pressure of their squashed bodies shot me out of the cube and out into the world.

It is memories of them and memories of you that push me to narrate and be omnipotent in a series of short stories about nothing.

Rat//Race

Meat Club

A long labyrinthine corridor led Jak down into the club. Thumping music caused the many meat hooks to spin and glisten. The chains induced a rhythmic clanking as the bass levels caused them to beat off the bloodied walls. The stench of retired carcasses prodded at his senses, leaving him feeling like someone had been playing with an open wound. Entering the turnstile of terror, he found that upon offering up his pound of flesh, a glowing cattle icon was branded industriously onto his skin. He was now part of the herd.

Looking down into the club he saw a gender- fucked individual lighting the level below. Shoddy lipstick marked out the coloring-book attitude that the figure had towards its own existence. Stubble grated at his expectations of womanly allure. He began to lose himself while observing this malformed and malleable interpretation of a woman. Thousands of spinning mirrors caught the body's desperate dancing. Make-up began to spit violently from its face as

the sweat from drug induced fantasy produced outbursts of perspiration. Monroe obsession dripped from the various masks being worn. Latex nursed its plastic skin, whilst also suggesting a day-walking profession.

Salty-blooded teenagers sat by the bar sucking down any type of beverage that was given to them, in the hope that their inhibitions would be reduced to the point, where they would no longer think about their financial violation. As the perpetual feeding continued many of the monstrous beings that buzzed around the bar gradually transformed into resplendent roaches. Now more bearable to the eye, the risk of Jak following them to the deathbed was wiped out. He would awake alone to the apocalyptic world of the morning after.

At the far side of the room the monstrous figure of a "PIG HEADED" woman sat alone, protected by a magic ribbon that made her a VIP (very important pig). Her derelict expressions of movement were secured somewhat, by her bestial head. Sitting across from her was a skinny pseudo-sexual, who hid his face behind a military issue gas mask with the intent of nuclear survival. His constant shaking predicated the heavy breathing that stimulated fog

on his visor. As his body began to convulse he joined the dance floor with agonising outbursts, it was evident that he had become contaminated. As Jak's eyes flew along his limbs, the root of his infection became apparent. Rising out of the clouds of sulphur he saw that the "PIG HEADED" woman was now firmly suckered on to the end of his hand. In Jak's last moments fear caught hold as he realised that in all his spectating he had accidentally made eye contact.

His skinned corpse spun on the kebab stick as the drunken delinquents filled the narrow confines of the take-away outlet. The shop clerk shaved his stubbly, speckled flesh and began loading the mulchy meat into their sporadic orders. His meat tasted the inside of their mouths and then found itself befriendng the contents of their stomachs, as it lay discarded and sticky along the corners of the streets.

As Jak scraped his tired thrown-up body off the dirty tarmac, the tweeting of a new day enveloped him in the form of musky strangers too wrapped up in their own digital directions. The clicking of their heels was carefully synchronised with their keypads. The ties noosed around

their necks would pull them through the day, tightening with every moment spent not moving. He blamed them for taking away the birds and everything else that they were told deterred progress; they were the only ones he was allowed to blame. Jak made shapes and figures for a while, until finally he pulled and shaped the lumps of vomit together bringing forth a resemblance of his old self through the cracks in a store window. He felt like shit and still looked like vomit. By the time a taxi had spotted his swollen signals the sun was already fleshing out the shadows and the mysteries of the night were returning to darkness. The taxi pulled up tight to the curb catching a puddle in its wake, bringing with it the distinct smell of home.

Memories of barking and gossip flooded Jak's mind as he lay poker straight in a warming bed. He began telling himself stories of stories he had told. People he had morphed and transformed beyond recognition. Somewhere in the depths of conversation they were all ghosts. Had he been propositioned by a pig? Did the smell of napalm lag behind him as he climbed out of the club? Was his friend now a POW? These were the questions that haunted him as he lay tethered loosely between dreams and wake. After attempting to fill his hangover with junk, his stomach

hung, dragging his mood with each and every ache. The frontline changed as often as the clubs that carried it. This was due to the constant manipulation of the corporate Fat-Cats, whose choices set where the legions of loyal hipsters would dance and sex themselves right out of existence. As the sun sagged he awoke dry mouthed and disjointed. He darted from worse to better as the shower rang through his head and the beads of refreshing water cascaded down his furrowed brow. This was straightened with everything else as he prepared himself for another call of duty. The taps spat out liquid that salted him. Speckles of dead skin slid down into the sink as he polished and perfumed himself for another nights poaching. Echoes of the music from upstairs comforted him then accompanied him to the door. After Thursday's butchery in the Meat Club it was straight to the Cotton Club to gently lull him into the treacherous club nights of the weekend.

The Cotton Club

The guards looked at Jak's paper work and nodded approvingly at his attire of all white. Hairy knuckles mashed open a doorway and signalled him into a corridor completely encased in cotton. The fluffy passageway carried him gently into the inner depths of the club. The cotton bar counter was sticky and sagged, decorated by coloured remnants of spilled drinks. The bartender was fresh out of school so was equally as soft and as mushy. Just before Jak could order he gestured him into the centre of the club, where everyone seemed to be congregated around something. Peeling back the layers of people a strange looking spindle sticking out of the ground manifested before him. Attached to this via leads were varying different types of dogs all parading around in a circle. People took turns plucking each passing dog. This hair of the dog doubled as a hangover cure and as a chance to mix with the young collies, which the club would soon soften up like it did everything else. As Jak sat chewing on clumps of dog hair his head cleared as quickly as the club filled. A game of fetch soon started. Men threw cocktails onto the dance-floor and watched the bitches wade as close as their collars would allow. It wasn't long after this game had started before the cotton candy scent

of the club smelt like wet dog. Beads of sweat dripped from each beast as they took turns pole-dancing on the spindle that kept them all at bay. Customers stood in the bar as the counter now lay stuck to their shoes. Broken glass and human waste soon hardened the club and by twelve the Cotton Club was now the Hard House. Refusing to let anyone else into the club the front doors were closed over and the guards trudged towards the spindle in the middle of the room. Panic spread wildly as the guards began releasing the now rabid hounds out into the hall. At first they moved around, slowly trying to sniff out their own scents that lay in the stomachs of men. As the night continued the remaining cotton got crusty with the carcasses of animals whose faces had been eaten off them. As the dogs began chewing on the chastity of these chaps the club was filed down to a sharp point. It was here that she smelt herself rotting inside of him. He froze under her gaze and knew right there and then that he would meet the same faith as all of his fellow fallen comrades. The scent of cheap spirit slid up his nostrils as she drew closer. Her fiery eyes ate through him as her seething teeth looked him up and down. She ate her fill and then moved on with the pack. To her he was and always will be faceless.

The sounds of screaming and general discontent guided Jak back to his area and then the ceiling music from the previous evening met him on the street, took his hand and walked him back to his bedsit. They slept with him that night and awoke with him in the afternoon. A headache now made them hard to listen to. The bathroom mirror showed a sphere with ears. This was all he had left. Depraved thoughts drifted with the twinkling of a text. It digitally dictated: LADS NITE OUT 2NITE, GNA TAKE CARE OF BIZNESS, MOVIN N A PAK, CLUBCARD @ 11. PS. NO JAK 2NITE POW;-(-

Routine sat him in front of a dinner that sounded like it was still moving. He questioned the competency of his microwave and started to miss the rest of his senses. He put on his uniform and followed the sound of shuffling feet and groans of boyish mingling, leaving behind the music. The only friend he ever had.

ClubCard

They met around the corner from the club. Amidst the pack of sprightly young men Jak's face was produced and he quickly shoved the old thing on. Happy to have a face again he followed the group obediently. Their first mistake was to queue as a group and by the time they got to the bouncers, problems were already afoot. He knew they would turn a blind eye to their decks as they were in fashion at the time, the real confusion started when they questioned them over the fact that they were all called Jak. "Der can only be four Jaks in a pack, one of youz gunna have to give it a miss tonigh' lads", the bouncer said sternly. "We are not cards" Jak said with trembling resistance. "Oh look! we have a Joker here, dat's fine den lads go on in and have a gud nigh".

They shuffled down the card covered corridor looking desperately for a space where they could begin socially lubricating themselves. Upon finding a table they all stripped down to their boxers and vigorously began applying lubricant to each other's bodies. With this done they were free to slide around the whole club slipping in and out of conversations with complete strangers. At first

this was great, any stranger that appealed to them, they'd just slide over to them and enjoy a moment of their company. The problems only arose later on in the night. Every time they slid back to their table they got more and more lubed up, which left them in favour of the horizontal position, unable to get back up. Joker tried to ask one of the girls that had appealed to him earlier in the night for help, but this resulted in her screaming at him that she does not have time for snakes. She then proceeded to push him and he shot like a torpedo straight out of the club and into the night. Like blood leaving the heart, he felt that he could only end up back where he started as he was pumped through the body of the city. This drifted away when he remembered that the corporates had given the city gangrene and sooner or later he would reach a dead end.

That City

Describing what Joker saw in his moments of circulatory relapse slipped out of his speaking hole with greater ease than he realised. These reoccurring thoughts are dug up, as I recall them now, leaving a sense of a tongue being scraped along the carnivorous ground level of a city, where the wealthy march their Rats purposefully through a great eternal maze. Poking and observing they mark our progress with bonuses and promises of penthouse apartments. From the curb these couldn't have seemed any further away.

A sea of faces flashed past his hurtling body as he zipped down the Rat infested streets. Raggy men nibbled on the end of a bin, happy with a stray crumb. Cratered women, still standing, launched abuse at anything their senses could perceive. That night this so happened to be a broken umbrella. The poor injured creature was flapping desperately trying to get back to where it had come from. It no longer was able to shelter itself from the tears that flooded the city and thus was bound to a life of heckling and abuse. These thoughts were raped by the haggard moans of the two old creatures still caught somewhere

between a scream and a cough. Like a breadcrumb trail, the lines of ash led back to the bin where a roll, half covered in wet ash and cigarette butts, was being birthed from a bin proud with purpose. The wind was panting heavily and occasionally it screamed. The after-birth consisted of tomato ketchup and half-melted cheese. As quickly as he had arrived he was gone, back into the mouths of men.

Lonely whispers of heartbroken lovers followed Joker as he flew down the boardwalk. Their tears lapped below him. Wax Jackets shone under the gleam of the streetlights, they sat staring at the sea silently slurring the language of suffering. Lost in the translation he kept slipping, leaving behind him two figures hiding behind the shadows of Rats and Pigs and even the Dogs. Bellows of Berlin echoed in the distance.

She was selling bananas 2 for a pound. Her feet were sweaty and constricted with plastic, but they kept the wet out, so she just had to grin and bear it. Business was good. Monkeys now roamed the city freely. The people in charge were under the impression that they would not only write the complete works of Shakespeare, but also

bring the city from all fours to all twos. So far all it brought with it was the old school approach of I'll scratch your back and you scratch mine. This resulted in almost everything going belly-up followed by extended periods of rolling in the muck. It's from these mixed-species faecal pits that the new night club movement first emerged. The Fat-Cats realised that they could turn a profit on their mistakes and began redeeming themselves by making as much profit on the misery as they possibly could. With this came the outlawing of fresh bananas. Fearing the one other industry that was still making a profit, they legalised synthetic bananas and banned everything else. The ecstasy that the bananas were being cut with gave leeway for a much greater profit margin, whilst also inducing a frame of mind that worked in tune with the new club movement. After the bottom fell out of the public banana sector the elderly lady befriended a five foot long length of rope.

Without her home-cooked meals, food quickly became as fast as the lifestyle that he was living. Home was just a hovel where he hid from the light. These memories were quickly superseded by the eclipse of his pupils. His senses began to dendritically dance beyond the realm of expression. These imaginary branches scraped the whole

room sending sensory signals shooting back into his smiling body. The emptiness of his now silent room was replaced by the sounds of two of his neighbours that could be easily heard through the thin damp walls. One was having a conversation with himself about toast, whilst spasmodically spouting out fragments of old Irish ballads. The other neighbour was vomiting on himself in the shower. He never made it to the chorus.

Upstairs

The absence of the ceiling music eventually pulled him upstairs. He squeezed past a corridor of smoky brown furniture. Tar gripped his slippers and held them for a while. Chatter raced around the room screeching to a halt as he tapped gently on the worn out door. Its squeaks kept him company as he pushed his way into the Part-E. Amidst the shabby and sparse decor there lay a couch almost the full length of the flat, it was facing the wall. Half a dozen sagging ponytails dangled off the back of the couch. Their ropey hair led to lost faces and crinkled flesh. Drum sticks, microphones and plastic guitars rubbed against their bulging waistlines, whilst hollowed out eyes hid behind carefully taped on onion goggles. Much of their waste was floating in the puddles of tears that had collected around their feet. The apartment sloped towards the bathroom. This was made obvious by the tear flow that eventually united with a drain that looked much like the fitting on the back of Joker's taps. These Guitar Heroes had fallen asunder to the villainous FUN that our society had long since fled from. FUN could not be had from the comfort of your own home. It was something that could only be measured in percentage volume and in ripeness and even then was never referred to by any direct name. A video

camera perched out of sight, hinted at the sinister reason behind this FUN. Joker had heard rumours that there were business men who would pay a lot of money for recordings of people having FUN, but just like any indulgence everyone seems designed to go overboard. The modem was wired to wink at him over and over again, reminding him of the faceless voyeurs whose smirks tightened with every pointless effort he made. This soon faded as he finally found a way of taking some of the FUN out of the place. He worked tirelessly in rotating each of the bodies upside down. As their upside down heads now stared at the flashing high scores on the screen in front of them, their faces now reflected the sadness that this room smelt like. Outside of the apartment he scraped their remnants from his shoes, using one of the concrete steps as a buffer. As he walked through the always half open gate to the place, he let their empty smiles guide him towards a dead end.

The B. Shaw

Pushed by his own plight he found himself at a pub force fed with everything they had made popular. Ghetto graffiti painted the way for the middle-class and the spoilt. Vinyl spun in the 1210s and blasted off the low ceilings and into the crowds, pounding and pushing their way towards the looming threat of the working week. Further nihilistic thoughts entered his mind as he sat outside looking lonely without the company of a cigarette to hold his hand. He decided just to sit and enjoy the show. A man began Russian dancing on a pool table and proceeded to pulling minors up alongside him and marinated them in his love for dance. With his introduction complete, the curtains opened and a floppy headed Tweenie took up the lead role of the dereliction that somehow always manages to evade people. The rest of the cast played the role of ruined buildings and the shit that cakes our streets. The DJ blasted out Beethoven's N0.14 in C sharp minor as the audience were introduced to our protagonist on the centre stage. She sat on a step with the top half of her body hanging on the floor. Both her hair and her face were soaked with spilled drinks. A pair of Jimmy's Shoes lay discarded on the ground, leaving her standing barefoot in her own vomit. Various creatures crowded around her

spitting messages of safety down her already full throat. Like any great tragedy we always think of Shakespeare and hope for a bloodbath, but alas Joker was in the B. Shaw and the whole irrational knot was untied with a stage direction that turned her dance with death into a Rohypnol advert. The Russian dancer left with the now motionless Tweenie in his arms and a grin on his face. Joker left with her vomit caked into the crevices of his boots.

The Working Week

12.01; the working week was slowly shifting into gear throughout the entire city. Joker took a detour on his journey home and decided to walk along the canal. The seldom found silence in the city gave him the time to think about the weekend past. His thoughts made him realise that most of it had already disappeared into the abyss. Fragments often came, but they felt twisted and warped. Had he even enjoyed himself this weekend? Was Joker even his name? He couldn't bring himself to answer these questions. Somewhere in this city someone had their grubby hands on his mind and they were calling the shots. He played with this notion for a while and then seized the control back by filling his mind with half-forgotten memories of, beasts and bins, past and present, theatre and taps, sex and thirst. Then finally, finally he asked the question,

“Whatever happened to our city?”

The cat's eyes that mark out the one-way routes which litter the city, went dark under the shadow of a paw.

Joker's eyes began to itch as a single claw shot towards him, narrowly missing his jugular. It attached itself to the once tie filled hollow that lay underneath the collar of his shirt. It pulled him up into the air and playfully dropped him in a top floor office that overlooked the city. The Fat-Cat that had picked him up sat behind a great golden desk. The office was laced with every luxury that one could imagine. His jewelled smile looked at him and then finally he spoke,

"We are incredibly dissatisfied with the question that you asked yourself this morning", he said with a painful purr.

"Don't think for a second that we haven't been reading this boring narrative that you call a life", he projected at Joker with the same velocity as the previous statement.

"Look I'm a Rat, aren't you going to at least play with me first", Joker proclaimed with last minute hope.

"What do you think this whole fucking charade that you call a life has been?" he asked with a great big grin on his face.

The laughter circled Joker and pulled his gaze to the floor with a heavy shame.

“Answer me one question before we decide how to deal with you, what exactly have you achieved, eh?”

“Nothing”, Joker replied and thought a little about the endless, self-defeating, pointless pursuit that was finally coming to an end.

Don't Walk

Mr. Conor Form always walked with his chest out. It helped with his posture. This was very important to him as he always felt that a good posture was one of the quickest ways to success. It also allowed for a closed top button on his shirt to become a regular feature in his daily attire. He wore a tie clip to stop his tie from being anywhere other than right in front of his perfectly pressed white shirt. He polished his shoes to a mirror finish as a reminder to the world of how he prided himself on his appearance. The shine of the sun in his toecaps also regularly caused him to look down at the ground. His superiors admired his subservience with every lateral promotion. Mr. Form felt appreciated and worthwhile when they started getting him to do most of their tasks. He knew that someday they would eventually surprise him with an upgrade. All he had to do was keep doing what he was told.

Today Mr. Form had a very important engagement that slightly hinted at a Jobware Update. The previous night he mapped out a route that would have him passing only one set of lights. By the time he had made it to the traffic lights he was already 23mins 47secs ahead of schedule and even then he was starting to heat up with stress. The

traffic lights kindly informed him not to walk and so he obediently began waiting for the lights to change. After ten minutes of the lights not changing he slowly started to turn his neck to the right hand side. He convinced himself that it was the best thing to do as otherwise he could get a creak in his neck that would not only effect his overall productivity, but could also lead to him having to take an unplanned day off.

While looking at the path on the other side of the road the source of the irritating clicking sound that he had been listening to for nearly a minute and a half became apparent. A tight-bunned fat assed woman was screaming herself out of neurosis with a pair of 6inch stiletto heels. Her roars of feminine freedom halted when one of the heels became lodged in one of the cracks on the curb. In too much of a rush and too self proud to stop her march she continued on, leaving a bloody limb standing upright in the middle of the street. She disappeared into the distance with dreams of functioning healthcare and human rights.

Meanwhile, Mr. Form was still staring at the limb and watching the people that had now congregated around it. Eventually a homeless man dislodged the leg and took the shoe off the foot. He walked away with an unbalanced

clicking. The leg was soon abducted by a grinning foot-fetishist, whose over coat started to blow in the wind as his pace quickened with each new erotic thought.

Pink limos with waving children and tight cleavage drew Mr. Form's attention to the traffic that was passing him on his right hand side. Grotty breasts and obnoxious mannerisms reminded him that sexual maturity was something that inbred hens always lacked. After shaving them from his sight he was soon met by something equally as unpleasant. A bulbous body struggled past him with its arms desperately trying to reach the handlebars on its lowrider bicycle. As its momentum picked up somewhat the ripples of fat struggled to free themselves from this embarrassing excuse of a human being. It weaved in and out of traffic with its fat curls ever so slightly rubbing off the sides of vehicles. This cooling of the fat brought Mr. Form to a shocking conclusion, did he see a smile somewhere deep in its lardy face?

By now Mr. Form was really starting to panic. The lights had not changed for about 15mins 24secs and the dread of lateness washed over him yet again. Caught on the crest of this wave was a man that had just appeared alongside him. He was on his haunches desperately trying

to pry some rotten crusty old chewing gum from the pavement. Mr. Form decided to offer him a brand new Orbit in the hope that he would stop making a public spectacle of himself. He declined Mr. Form's offer with the chewing tongue of a madman. He explained to Mr. Form that he recently read a book that he never really managed to grasp, so in an attempt to fit in he decided to become a gum thief, thus whether or not he was correct, he would now have a position of authority in this field. This was not the first time he apparently tried to become the title of a book; he had already tried catching 22 items, making a clock from an orange, having breakfast at Tiffany's and setting up an unlimited dream company... All of these failed due to his tight budget and the constraints of reality. Now, finally he had found something that literally spotted every street in the city and was paid for by someone else. Mr. Form stood there trying to calculate what this man's worth to society was and upon realising that it was well into the minus figures the man had vanished as quickly as he had appeared. He was happy about this as he had a tendency to be a little bit OCD towards stains, be it on his suit or standing alongside him. He shuddered at the thought of the last couple of minutes he had spent in the aura of this man.

Fed up with the possibility of more interaction with strangers Mr. Form decided to put on a pair of isolators. This new gadget came hardwired with everything that was needed to separate oneself from reality. It had intuitive technology that instantaneously adapted to its environment and shut off whatever sense that was causing social involvement. Cries for help fell on dead-ears as the device muted his hearing efficiently. It had the ability to momentarily turn a handicap into a tool for detachment. Advertisements dressed the buildings and promised a world of style and distinct individualism. Of course the product was so expensive that anyone who could afford it already spent most of their time working as anonymous drones, updating code for important government processes. Mr. Form was attracted to the product because it turned laziness into a fashion accessory. He remained encased inside the device until it gave him back his sight, revealing a green light with the word walk glowing behind it. It passionately burned through him as he was lengthening his stride to allow for the remaining deadline.

Finally he reached his destination, but above the door he read the words. No Entry.

I ♥ POPE

Seven years before Abaddon came sliding out of his mother's vagina a seismic social event occurred. Over one quarter of Ireland's entire population attended a large public mass in Phoenix Park. Amongst the crowd many children were born, but unlike Abaddon they didn't have a lifetime of lies ahead of them, their time was just about to come to an end.

Abaddon grew up a devout Catholic. He was a pioneer, who had little time for sin and a lot of time for everything good. It's hard to pinpoint what caused his fine moral structure to rot, but many analysts believe it emerged alongside his late puberty. His academic records dipped as he focused on maintaining normalcy. This was difficult. He found it hard to maintain a conversation. His speech would tire from raking back the scattered gravel from his tongue and his thoughts were always wringing with the strange acts of sodomy that he played over and over again in his mind. These deviant thoughts played their part in constraining the reoccurring stiffness that he would experience in his nether region. This made him worry about his relationship with God. Until he entered college

he suppressed these thoughts using self-harm. He tore up coke cans to slice away at his inner thigh. The constant pain when he walked made him feel closer to his creator. Not long after he started college he found alcohol. This gateway accelerated a lifetime of lack and for brief periods of time brought forth a Stevenson-esque vision of the man Abaddon was hiding inside of himself. He often drank himself into make shift pope costumes and then ... (Things would get a little hectic).

Although the Vatican had many loyal patrons like Abaddon, the fancy-dress business just wasn't giving them the money they needed anymore. As a consequence of this, vacation time had to be cut short for an emergency meeting to not only acquire a new profit stream, but to also regain the popularity that the molestation qualm had dented somewhat. After many hours of discussion they all agreed on a return papal visit to Dublin, but this time the icing on the cake would be that the new Pope would perform his debut album for the first time live at the event. A few phone calls were made and within the hour work had begun on a huge stage made entirely of cheese.

The morning newspaper presented Abaddon with this

information and for the first time in months he soberly smiled. The gravel in his throat had been tarred over and quite often his hoarseness made him difficult to understand, but today his parents didn't need to listen, behind his bloodshot eyes they could see a glimmer of hope for their son. After a stodgy breakfast Abaddon rang the ticket office to enquire about the cost of tickets to Pope Rat-Singers Concert. The phenomenally high price grated at his conscience briefly, but he carried on, telling himself that you can't put a price on your soul. The ticket cost 249 euro.

As the date for the concert came closer information on who the supporting act would be was finally released. In the music business he went by the name €1. People spoke of him being so tough because his parents were eaten by rival gang members. As a consequence of this he had to be raised by prostitutes and pimps. It was this bizarre upbringing that led to him hitting the big time under the mentorship of a chocolate Daddy known to the world over as M&M.

A couple of weeks before the concert the Vatican began aggressively marketing the concert by getting legions of

awkward trainee priests to plant a crucifix on every street in Dublin. The crosses were then plastered with posters promoting the event. Another cell of clergy was instructed to perform CPS (Central Post Spamming). They inserted ads laced with biblical jargon into every piece of post that entered the country. Although playing with fire their final message was clear, anyone who didn't have the money for tickets to this concert had the prospect of an eternity in hell to look forward to.

As Abaddon opened his mail one day, this reality burned deep into his heart and right there and then he made a promise to Mr. Almighty himself that no matter what, he would get the money for what was now being referred to as, The Great Collection. The recession proved a worthy opponent and after many rounds Abaddon's ego had become bruised and beaten. The clocks ticking away in his brain and on his wrist sent him into a transient barefoot march. He awoke many hours later with the abrupt stench of cheese. He was at the location where the rebirth of Catholicism was soon about to happen, Phoenix Park. The fires of preparation had settled for the night and soon the only light left was flashing waist height in the distance. Abaddon followed the light, peering eyes and silent smooches soon made him aware that it was in fact a signal

for male prostitution. He spent the next couple of days moving from flasher to flasher hoping to satisfy The Collection's needs and redeem his soul. On the 7th day he exchanged a wad of small bills for a ticket to the greatest show on earth.

The Pope's arrival in Dublin had everyone in the country in a frenzy. Truck loads of Rosary beads had been given free of charge to the public, so a wave of open-prayer would greet him as he journeyed through the city in the direction of the Four Seasons Hotel. Parents stood with their jaws dropped in awe as he waved robotically to a sea of adoring faces. Many of their babies choked to death on these beads because their attentions were transfixed on his costume. A crystal blue glistening aura led towards a mysterious orb that was rolled around the Pope. Its outer membrane, filled with sweat and tears, hid its larval felicitations from the lobotomised onlookers. It was the brain-child of the entire fashion industry and was aptly called EDEN. The costume itself would supposedly be undergoing four changes during his time in Ireland, none of which could be described using the process of rational thought. His convoy left in its wake a red carpet of trampled bodies. The fireworks that came after his arrival

set alight the adverts that lay stuck to the roads and acted as kindling to the crucifixes that littered the city. By midnight the city was sitting in a waste of ash, stubbed with the bodies of the nights' victims.

The rain washed this massacre to the gutters, in an attempt to pull back the flock of loyal victims. The survivors followed the bloody tire-tracks barefoot, but soon rumours spread that having feet was a privilege that they did not deserve. Thousands of people sanded themselves out of existence and by morning only a handful of stumps had made it to the end of the pilgrimage. These few had managed to use the remaining half of their jaws to roll their heads the final few metres to the entrance. Finally grinded away, they waited zombiely at the entrance to the hotel. A fanfare presented the second transformation of the EDEN costume at the panoptic of the main rotunda. The Pope now wore a cape made entirely out of the scalps of abused children. Beneath this lay something wordless. The hair dragged along the ground as he made his way out the entrance. Before reaching the car, two of the hundreds of priests that circled him ran ahead to lie on the heads that were obstructing his path to the vehicle. His passing over the priests crushed the heads into a bony mess that was immediately moped up with more priests.

Their sacrifice was blessed with a drop of holy water that fell from the Pope's shaft as the priests struggled to wedge him into the vehicle.

The night before the concert Abaddon decided to head to Phoenix Park so he could solicit himself just a little more so he would have the money to buy a souvenir at the concert. Throughout the night many a wandering priest crucified themselves to Abaddon's accepting body and by morning he resurrected in a ditch. The stench of excitement clung to his clothes and wriggled outward from his pores to meet the cheesy odour that symbolised what would be the most important day in his life. Millions of people made their way to Phoenix Park, leaving a wave of panic and chaos behind them. Anyone who passed through the barriers without a ticket was shot at point-blank range and then given a formal warning. Trucks loaded with body bags pushed through the masses. Religious incantations led the scuttling subservient crowds towards a great gorgonzola altar. When all of the crowds had been herded into their designated spaces an electric fence seethed into life. Everyone, but the agoraphobics seemed happy with their containment. So comfortable where they, that amidst all the shoving and queuing no one even noticed the black sizzling skin that now sealed the exits. What was noticed

though was who and what was entering the VIP area. The sounds of deep, nasally oinking festered within the cream of the cheese. Handsome children and uptight women playfully shared cartons of wine with the self-confessed celebrities of the recent Murphy report. Everyone seemed to be having an abusively good time.

By the time Abaddon had gotten his I ♥ POPE t-shirt the supporting act was already coming out on stage. What appeared to be €1 came swaggering out onto the stage wearing seven bulletproof jackets, one for each time he had been shot. They looked like improperly attached life-jackets that were sucking his neck back towards his ghetto regions. The glistening pimp staff he was using to try and stand, couldn't even hold the hunch that the kilos of hanging gold and diamonds had given him. His resilience pushed him through the pain he was experiencing from the contortion of his spine. His silent mumblings soon caught up with his thoughts and so began his live performance of his number one record Pimps & Popes. The crowds went into overdrive when the microphone began mechanically oscillating his voice in time with a sped up version of a song that had already proven its worth in the past. After he had finished this live rendition he hobbled off towards a waiting helicopter, whilst priests walked

through the crowds with giant baskets strapped to their chests. As their baskets filled, their arching spines began to sympathise with €1 and the change that he made. After this tactical charity drive the audience immediately went limp. Coinless, their blood-flow increased. Psalms bided their time, so everyone would remain livid with liveliness for the Pope's grand arrival. Like clockwork their circulation was fully on stream to meet the third incarnation of the Pope.

From the inner depths of the heaving crowd, Abaddon's eyes eventually aligned with the stage. A conical costume wrapped in young tongues attracted the taste of every fashion aficionado present. Its tasteful design had the crowds chewing. Abaddon nipped his lip with excitement. His mind was damp with expectation. Time warped as the cone began to unravel. EDEN's final transformation brought with it promises of change. Beneath these promises there lay a coiled mess of hissing tubes. In a haze, somewhere between seconds and hours the priests marched back and forth bringing the tubes to the audience. Abaddon came out of his trance long enough to see a withered man-of-collar before him. The snake-like tube he was holding was split in two at the end, revealing two long thin needles. The last thing Abaddon saw was the

shine of their tips just before they were plunged deep into his eyes.

The Pope now stood alone on stage. In whispers he sang the words "Melken der Ratten", over and over again. His smooth voice was supported by the thirsty rumblings of the machine. Together, they consumed the country.

The Wank Booths

Homemade Life-Shake

Serves: 2

Ingredients:

Happiness

Aspirations

Relations

Dreams

1. Put your relations in the blender. Feed them in toes first so they will blend completely.
2. Fasten the lid and begin the liquidisation process. Use high speed for 20-30 years, until all ties with family are sufficiently severed.
3. Measure out your dreams with a tablespoon and cup.
4. Sometimes dreams will jam under the blade. If there is a jammed dream, use a spatula to unjam it, and blend again.
5. Once the mixture is evenly blended, slowly add happiness through the opening of the blender lid. Keep adding until the blender sounds smooth.
6. Enjoy...

Another Night on the Boardwalk

The rain rattled on their wax coats, whilst a strange boy stared and then scuttled away. Their conversations had gotten as bad as the weather. They started suddenly and then dripped slowly back to where they came from. Nothing interesting was ever said anymore. They both looked at each other for a while, seeing only a mirror of their own sorrow. Little did they know that two specially prepared reminders of their shitty lives were just leaving the clouds and heading straight for them. Both men screamed when the cups impacted. They had both been hit square in the face with the sum of all of the things that were now gone from their lives. Finally, for the first time in months they started a conversation. The gooey white mess that both of them were scooping off their faces had brought back a strange and unforgettable memory from their youth.

Berlin – ...

The wank booths lured them using lines of human flesh as bait. Naive, they left the safe confines of Das Sex Shop and drifted through the walls into a strange cubicle-filled space. The generic sounds of pornography filled their ears as the overwhelming stench of bleach whitened their nostrils. Red Curtains acted as ellipses for the plastic walls they were attached to. They chose one to draw back, only to be quickly met by someone pulling it back and shouting OCCUPIED. Eventually they found one that looked empty and they proceeded to slip back the red cover. Inside they were met with an even stronger stench of bleach. To the left there was a chair with two arm rests. On the wall there was a slot that dispensed toilet roll. In front of the chair was a TV embedded in the wall, it displayed a menu of pornos. The coin slot below indicated how the film would be seduced into initiation. The fresh semen that they then saw on the floor made them feel sick to their stomachs. They quickly left the booths and the entire memory stayed there, hidden behind red veils of iniquity.

Moments after the Shakes

Somehow that memory had ejaculated back into their lives and with it brought a conversation that led to an idea. A beautiful sunrise met their decision to bring the Berlin wank booths to Dublin.

They were heavy, but even their combined weight was not enough for the elevator to work. It knew its clients too well. Unfortunately the stairway couldn't even remember its own length and it wasn't long before they were canoeing in their own sweat. A couple of strokes later and they finally made it to the top floor. Behind the golden door they had been directed to, lay an office embellished with every jewel imaginable. Their astonishment was interrupted by a well timed grunt from the end of the room. The sound came from a bulge that was once obviously a man.

"What do the two of you want?", he asked mid-yawning.

"Well we are looking for an investor for a new business that we want to set up", Mr. Charleston said with a humble

lip.

“There was still a Recession out there the last time I looked, this better be Sex or Banana related or my attorney will tear you apart for wasting my time”, he shouted, jiggling from all of the noise he just made.

“We want to bring wank booths to Dublin”, squeaked Mr. Rickroll.

He whispered to himself for a while and then aggressively punched at what seemed to be his stomach. His fist disappeared with part of his arm. It returned with a bundle of cash that was then tossed onto the ground. As they collected it on their knees, he towered over them speaking of the conditions of his involvement in their business venture.

Sea-Men

The months washed by for Rickroll and Charleston and the words of their beneficiary were soon sweated out of them. Water trickled down their coats as they stood watching the cargo ship that came bobbing into view. Upon entering into the harbour, sea-men rushed out of the vessel and began tying it to the dock. It wasn't long before the two aspiring businessmen had a handful of these sailors searching for the container holding two dozen of Berlins best boxes of auto-eroticism. In desperation they began prying open any container that appeared to match the description jotted down on the soggy note quivering in Rickroll's shaking hand. Most of the containers they opened were filled with starved illegal immigrants, whose words were minced with the crawling whispers of thriving maggots, but a select few were found to contain something quite horrific. In plain sight lay wooden crates filled with fresh organic bananas. This find was followed by a flood of vomit and an eerie silence sat amidst a sea of shocked faces. The sailors frantically contacted the appropriate authorities and in a matter of minutes the Yellow Jack was flapping in the harbour wind, signifying that the ship was now under quarantine. A thick latex hood was pulled over the entire ship leaving our two

protagonists stuck onboard. An official sounding voice soon told them not to worry that they had been wrapped in a pleasurmax protection device and that the emergency would be over shortly. The mood worsened as the tiring sailors started to stray off alone. By the time the quarantine crew had investigated and eventually doused the organic products with sulphuric acid all of the sea-men had drifted away. The correct container was eventually extracted and placed a couple of metres away from the docking bay. Moans filled the air as the vessel pulled out of harbour. They stared lovingly at the product of this union and then pried it open with a crowbar.

The Installation

After weeks of searching they finally managed to procure a cheap lease on an abandoned church. It was in a central location and its phallic architecture was well suited to the product they would be offering. After much discussion they agreed on the name, The Choking Bishop. On the morning of the installation they arrived earlier than usual. The booths had been left loose in the church the night before. Today they hoped to achieve the symmetry of that cubicle filled space in Berlin on which their dreams were built. After aligning all of the booths perfectly, Rickroll spent the rest of the day wiring all of them in accordance with the PMS (Pornographic Manufacturers Specifications). Charleston stood above the entire floor on a long ladder trying to cover the stain glass windows with custom made coloured Perspex panels, detailing varying acts of the Kama Sutra. He would take occasional breaks to spit out phlegm and pick the dried nasal mucus from his manhole nostrils. Rickroll wasn't long about wiring the booths and just before lunch, he rattled for change in his pocket so he could test if the setup was successful. As the coin rolled down the slot and rubbed with the ON switch his many mistakes quickly groaned into reality. All twenty-four of the machines began to scream with exaggerated orgasms on

full volume. Charleston watched helplessly from above as the noise pushed Rickroll out into the centre of the shop. His suffering was overshadowed with the ecstasy that filled the room. The last thing that he ever heard was the climax; this was superseded by blood pouring out of both of his ears. Charleston knew that this newfound deafness would hinder Rickroll's sales assistant abilities and thus he swiftly placed him in the office to work on accounts. With the help of a few people qualified in booth installation they soon had the premises ready for its grand opening. The night before they stood outside and turned on their neon sign for the first time. It had a nice tacky glow that showed a pair of hands choking a bishop. As they sat there soaking in the blasphemy, a crooked smile rolled across Rickroll's face.

Business Matters

The business took off without a hitch and before they knew it the paths were lined with a never ending flow of punters. A couple of free viewings informed Charleston that a critic would be coming along before the end of the week to review the new premises. This information led to Charleston rapidly initiating plans that he intended on introducing over a longer period of time. The first of these was to hire more staff. He scouted the streets at night looking for rent boy orphans, who would be happy with a salary of a couple of euro a day. The back of the truck was full by dawn. He allowed each of them to sleep in one of the booths at night and then during the day it would be their responsibility to maintain their space. Anyone who disagreed with this was fed to the rest. He allowed them to eat anything that they collected in their dustpans during the day. His next plan was to provide this constant stream of workers with a uniform that suited the establishment. Rickroll nodded in acceptance to his idea of having the uniform in the fashion of the men that once worked in this space. A few phone calls later the order had been made. The Vatican was happy of the work as their recent visit to Dublin had grown sour. After a couple of days had passed, the entire staff of The Choking Bishop were wearing white

clerical shirts with black collars buttoned on. Charleston's happiness with this new image was evident in his attempts at slapping out Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker Suite on the heads of all of his new employs, as they struggled to dust their breakfasts from the floor. The inspector was spotted late Friday afternoon. He didn't make any fuss, he just entered one of the booths with a notepad.

After a few minutes the now flushed figure stood watching one of the boys clean up his mess. He jotted a few notes into his pad and left as quickly as he had arrived. For all intents and purposes his visit appeared to be a success, all Charleston and Rickroll could do was wait for the review.

The WWW (Wankers Worldwide Weekly) displayed this article the following morning.

Clinical Calamity:

As a regular user of wanking booths I had to ask myself, had the men in charge ever even used one of these services. How are you supposed to provide a service if you don't even know your customers? The cleanliness of the

place was not suitable for regular users of these facilities. Such an institution is presenting people with a picturesque view of a worldwide market that is built on filth and depravity. These clowns present us with clean cut orphans and grade A pornography, what do they think we are? Normal? Their market research seems to have stemmed from the failed Berlin wank booths that were brought down by the bleach that stripped their floors. My advice is to stay away from The Choking Bishop, get on a plane and go to somewhere like Turkey.

In the wake of this write up their business hit an instant slump. They tried special offer days such as 50% off wank Wednesdays, but things just got slower and slower. It wasn't long before the hungry children started eating one another, until finally there was only one of them left. Charleston had him one evening with mint peas and potato gratin.

With the boys gone the shop started to get sloppy. This did help increase their profits somewhat, but the initial attack was a poison that was slowly sucking the life out of the business. Rickroll now spent his days trying to initiate human-flesh search engines dedicated to finding the

people responsible for dispensing the journalist from the WWW. His hunger was finally filled by a forensic entomologist, who went by the name of Gregor. He informed Rickroll that as a result of an illegal banana import, the government incinerated their bodies in fear that the corpses would try something like this again. Their ashes were bought by a private investor, who made everyone well aware that he intended on refining them into fine cigars.

Communications with Gregor were swiftly exterminated. Dissatisfied with the results of his search Rickroll pushed passed the pins and needles and forced himself to stand. The tingling of his legs made the defecated denim on his jeans hug him ever so gently. Step by step he made his way towards Charleston. He sat adjacent to the booths watching people make the most of Free Fridays. It was these kinds of offers that made Charleston come to realise that they never were businessmen. Their miserable lives had burned the fat from their souls, leaving them to sink in a world where the buoyant always come out on top. People like them usually drowned in the rain.

A strange whistling filled the shop. Charlston stared at

Rickroll for a moment only then remembering in his lack of reaction that he was deaf. Charleston followed the screaming pitch to the back of the shop, behind the makeshift partitions for the booths. The screech was coming from the pressure valve for the sperm disposal pipes. As he waved away the steam desperately trying to find the release valve the pressure sent a dial along with its glass container shooting towards his eyes.

He woke up in absolute darkness, but could feel the whiteness around him. Both men lay covered from head to toe in a cake of reproductive cells. The Life-Shakes had finally shook them to the ground.

Loud squelches introduced their benefactor feet first. His slow footsteps censored his presence, until his voice rated the situation with moderate diction.

“Well, judging by your lack of payment it looks like we are going to have to enact the failsafe agreement!”, he declared with bouncy importance.

“If you wouldn’t mind reiterating what this agreement was,

that would be excellent”, Charlston said, well aware of the severity of this figures presence.

“Well it stated that if you fail to repay my loan within a six month period that both of you will be brutally sodomised”.

He paused for their response, prodding them with his misshapen smile.

“Well maybe not being able to see or hear might make this a little bit easier”, Charleston jested reservedly.

“Oh, but I’ll make sure you feel it”, he licked these words as they travelled out from his mouth.

The silence and the darkness couldn’t hide them from the acts of perversion that progressed after this discussion. When he was finished he ate what was left of them and was carried back to his high-rise.

Between 24 and 72 hours later, their digested remains plopped out of a sewage pipe under the boardwalk and

joined the current of the city.

The Wig of Lies

Once Upon A Lie

Herodotus showered in the sweat of his own stories. Stress dusted his nostrils with equal measures of energy and anger. He redesigned himself with sharp angular shirts. A smirk slithered along his face as he spotted the nape of his neck with cheap aftershave. He rummaged at his package hoping that its tiny size wouldn't be noticeable behind his padded pants. His pockets bulged with rolls of dusty dollars. He led a grim life, fuelled by serving celebrities cakes and coffee and selling Superquinn bags packed with speed and ecstasy to anyone who had a club-card. His withered eyebrows leaned jovially above the black bags under his eyes. Perfectly trimmed facial hair pointed in the direction of slightly cracked lips. Herpes hid patiently under his skin waiting for the snow to melt. Moles and freckles punctuated his face with pretend politeness. His uvula danced hypnotically and enticed you to listen to what he was saying. Lashes stampeded along his eyes as he looked for a lady to lip-synch his life to. He found one easily enough and soon she was in his apartment. Just before his microscopic penis entered her a dart of fuzz fell

from his head. Standing before her was a bald eunuch, who had every intention of keeping her in bed. Her screams would saturate his stories in the form of exaggerated orgasms.

Dishonesty is the best policy

It was a nice dishonest morning. The sun was gleaming, but the temperatures were still low. The morning chill at first nudged Herodotus, but was soon shaking him aggressively out of his slumber. After closing the window and putting on a dressing gown, the smell of a fry cooking dragged him by the two nostrils into the kitchen. His Wig had itself wrapped around the handle of the frying pan. In its convulsions it managed to toss the food, only leaving a few strands of hair as a sacrifice. After breakfast they had a good long chat about the match, taking occasional breaks when the saw met bone. Herodotus got word of his team's results from the previous night as he clipped off fingertips with a secateurs. His happiness with these could be seen in his swing. With her teeth smashed into dust she was ready for the bin. They hoped that the waste collector would not notice the corpse, but after collecting the bag he was back within moments. He had with him a fine for failure to declare a murdered body. Wiltedly, they paid the fine, all the time thinking of the Plant Food that they would be missing out on that week. The body-bag was tossed into the basement. They hung an air-freshener on the door handle so the rich scent of severed corpse wouldn't flood through the house.

Mr. Know-It-All

For the rest of the week they felt transplanted. It was during this period of icy breezes and cold turkey that their friendship entered a new and exciting place. On Wednesday evening after spending the entire day staring at Judge Judy and exercising his stomach with junk food, Herodotus gave The Wig head. Although they had done it many times before this was the first time that neither of them were fertilised and this made it something special. The Wig wasn't long about returning the favour. Herodotus styled The Wig with white gunk and together they looked on in splendour at what they were becoming. Sharing a mutual understanding of how to manifest something from nothing made the answers flock to them. They now had the plans to the world's first perpetual motion machine, they had the answer to the Deckard debate, they knew why it is considered necessary to nail the lid down on a coffin, they even understood why there isn't mouse flavoured cat food. Together they had made Mr. Know-It-All. Unfortunately after realising that his existence came from a play on words, he unfastened and crashed back into the mouth that he came from. Herodotus brushed The Wig off with a lie and it wasn't long before they had

forgotten what the whole conversation at the mirror was about.

As time darted from decades to days, Herodotus finally plucked up the courage to ask The Wig to live with him. It accepted the offer with all the excitement of a horny dog and began mounting him from behind. When The Wig had made its way to its perch on the top of Herodotus' head it began to move in. Wavy hair crashed down on his scalp with the erect force of over a 100,000 syringes. Herodotus' foaming mouth and rolling eyeballs conveyed to The Wig how much he wanted this. He awoke in desperate need of a shower.

Once Upon a Lie

Herodotus spent most of his time in the shower, staring at his perfectly sculpted body through misty mirrors. He would have fallen in love a long time ago if it wasn't for mirrors. He took his medicine, so that his mind would have a chance to catch up with his body. Only the best fabrics were allowed touch his silky skin. A set of pristine porcelain teeth crept out from beneath his golden smile as he dabbed expensive cologne along his neck. He tried desperately to fit his massive beefy Mc Manstick into his skinny jeans. Polished credit cards lined his wallet with military obedience. He spent his life consuming cakes and coffee. At night he would do lucky-dip on a drug and spend the night seducing women with his presence. His perfectly plucked eyebrows framed his burning blue eyes. A cleanly shaven face slid eyes towards Herodotus' exquisite cherub lips. Spotless pores made it all seem so inviting. Unpunctuated, his face seemed dreadfully approachable. Sealed lips said more than any speech. Eyelashes would flutter when he scanned his surrounding area. Without words being exchanged he left the club with the pick of the pigs. As his porn star potential came to the fore his hair became dishevelled. It hung from his face, rubbing her rosy cheeks with each and every thrust. Her

moans scared the ghosts away that night and together,
they soon slipped into a blissful sleep.

Honesty is the best policy

It was a good honest morning. The sun's heat caused Herodotus to awake with a desperate need to quench his thirst. After having a glass of water he decided to make breakfast for the young beauty still asleep in his bed. He brought everything that he had prepared into her on a silver tray. The lovely smells made her wake up with a dimpled smile. After her breakfast, they began talking to each other about their relationship. It was only a matter of hours before Herodotus decided to ask her to move in with him. She willingly accepted and by the end of the week she was not only married to him, but was also in the process of birthing their first son. Their newly born child seemed to emerge without a pain or an ache. They named him eLi.

Herodotus jumped out of the bed and made haste towards the shower. Whilst conditioning his silky locks they began falling out in clumps into his hands. He ran out of the shower screaming, only to be confronted by the eerie silence in the household. He sprinted towards his son's cot, only to be met by a lifeless eLi. As he took him in his arms he began crumbling into dust. His tears transformed into beads as they touched eLi's ashes. Herodotus soon

composed himself just enough to run around the house on all fours screaming the name of his missing wife. His frantic search eventually brought him to the doorway of the basement. The flickering lights presented him with a blood-soaked sack. Its contents consisted of his wife's body chopped into tiny pieces.

Comic Combover

After Herodotus' confabulation had come to an end he had a pulpy collision with reality. This could be summed up with him now accepting the fact that he was a monstrous hermit who not only, never had any contact with women, but who had also never even left his house. Only a small part of The Wig now remained on his head. In an attempt at maintaining his self-esteem, Herodotus covered the few sprigs of hair that were left in hair gel and combed them over the rest of his head.

The Wig did in fact have the last laugh. Not long after this publication it totally uprooted and started a new job with a transnational corporation. It now spends its days peddling lies so the companies employees can continue to breath.

It turned out that Herodotus was no Hero, nor was he us, he was just a dot on a page soaked in ink. He tried once more to shower himself with lies, but without The Wig it wouldn't work. The bath salts bubbled in the acid as he prepared himself for a dip. He washed himself of his sins, his lies and finally, his skin.

Travelator

Mr. Goodbody had always wanted to be someone. He wanted to be that man who always had visible veins on his biceps, whose wind swept hair licked up women like horses tonguing salt. Instead he was a waking zombie, a BUSINESS man.

The deafening rumble of cleaning woke him just in time to see a parade of immigrant cyborgs float past him. Their legs had been replaced with industrial floor buffers. They symphonically cleaned under the conduction of a programming code that apparently rewarded good cleaning with Esc. This was in fact true, but the conductor's idea of Esc was to direct the worker towards the nearest incineration depot. Mr. Goodbody turned away from these glistening corridors. On his other side a mirror stretched on for what appeared to be eternity. Mr. Goodbody was shocked at the reflection that was staring back at him in the mirror. He hadn't looked in a mirror since he started his new life, he was too busy. His body had become one of those huge suitcases, that when you go to an airport everyone just stares at and thinks to themselves, [{ jeez he actually managed to fit the kitchen

sink in there }]. Unfortunately for him the kitchen sink was actually his gut and judging from the smell in his pants it had definitely sprung a leak or two. His skin had become leathery and smelt like that of a grandead. As he stood there carrying both his weight and a black briefcase in his left hand, his thoughts drifted towards the futile nature of his existence. Frozen in thought he continued moving, towards the infinite abyss of endless possibilities. For a long time he was alone. He waited for the order of Time to return, but it didn't. Bored with waiting he opened his briefcase. Inside there was a newspaper with no date on it. The headline informed him that Time had become fed up with Order and had taken a double barrel shotgun to itself. Police had a few leads, but were finding the case difficult due to the fact that the fabric of how we perceive reality was now fragmented chaos. Mr. Goodbody collected himself and began reordering Time, starting with seconds he decided he would work his way all the way up to eternity. The sounds of whimpering and crying led him out of his thoughts with all the passion and romance of rape. Figures started coming into view. What he then saw was a family circled around a woman on her knees. She was clutching her heart with the fat mittens that she probably called hands. Closer to her, fries, burgers, nuggets, milkshakes... They circled her aura with the warmth of a

wet blanket, their alluring scents drowned out her families concerned voices. Screaming wriggles dragged her towards the fries, which she ate from the ground as her heart had its final beat. That was the first time Mr. Goodbody had witnessed a McDeath. This spectacle depressed him (nothing some fast-food and a cigarette couldn't fix). The fallen beast and her mock-up family eventually drifted out of sight. Somewhere amidst the concaves of his innards, hunger had presented itself. Like an unexpected guest he hid behind the curtains of his eyes waiting for that doorbell to go off in his mind.

When he finally opened the curtains, his eyes were met with a cigarette and a chicken waltzing together. As they continued to dance the scent of smoke and chicken sweat drew Mr. Goodbody's tongue out of hiding. It danced with them, hoping for a taste. They eventually vanished, leaving him with more cravings. Mr. Goodbody began restraining his hunger by chewing on his fingertips. Before entering bloody-stub territory his stomach began eating into the fat reserves in his body. With this stress finally gone he decided to go to sleep. Doing this standing up was something he had been doing almost his entire life, so it wasn't long before his head was hanging to the right with the tip of his nose rubbing along the mirror. During

his slumber and McDonald presented the standby version of Mr. Goodbody with almost every animal in existence lying in agony on the ground. It would have been interesting to see how all of them experienced their heart failures and the differences that occurred. The dream world that he was currently in was probably holding him tight with compliments of his existence. Mr. Goodbody awoke ... Fuck... where is he gone? I keep forgetting that he is still moving. Ok quick we need to get this narrative back on track. (Please Note: I don't exist). The mirror had an oily line from Mr. Goodbody's dragged nose. Chasing this along in an accelerated fashion we are met with Mr. Goodbody returning to limbo.

Since waking a change had occurred in Mr. Goodbody's mentality. He threw his briefcase over the railing and into the corridor. Malfunctioning Buffer-Bots quickly devoured it in the hope that it contained a magical edible Esc code. All it did was taste like leather and paper. Mr. Goodbody would have kicked himself for not trying to eat the briefcase, if he was able to lift his legs from the floor. With what little strength he had left in his arms he loosened the tie on his neck and undid the top button on his shirt. If he was going to be travelling for eternity, he was at least going to do it feeling comfortable. This was short lived, his temple had

been abandoned. Derelict. It began to crumble around him. It was impossible to meditate with the sounds of his stomach eating itself. So he just stood there. Waiting for something to catch his attention long enough, so the pain could seem like a dream. If only he had his I-phone, he might have been able to download an app that would take care of the situation. Instead he was left with his non-digital mind, that to be honest gave up remembering things a long time ago. Since waking he couldn't remember how long he had been where he was. He didn't even know whether he had been there before he woke up. His external hard drive would have had a backup of everything, but that was wherever he came from, a long forgotten place. He had a sinking feeling as soon as he realised that he was probably in Mergeratory. He was trapped somewhere between good business deals and selling door to door hoovers. At some point in his life he had given up his identity to a faceless company. Now he was left in a perpetual state of seeking a destination that was never coming. It wasn't all glum, at least he had a lifetime of lard to feed on. His withering and thinning reflection served as a constant reminder of how quickly a lifetime can be consumed, but he was too busy indulging to look at his own reflection.

There were days where he felt like cattle on a killing line and there were days where he felt like a machine on an assembly line (they varied). He had little faith, but the thrill of possibility kept him hanging to his skin and bones. What Ifs soon spread like cancer throughout his very being. He fought them as best he could, but eventually they found a way into his brain. No matter what they told him he was too far gone. He no longer had the energy to turn around or to climb off. He had committed himself to this journey and like everything else in his life, whether he liked it or not, if he started something he had to see it through. The mirror no longer reflected anything other than skin and bones. It was as if he had consumed his own identity. If he even had one to start with? His whole experience, his whole lifetime was a waking dream. He went his whole life starving himself of his own identity and now he had been pushed to consume the identity that took its place.

His heart finally stopped beating just before his emaciated body finally made it to the terminal.

Epilogus

F5

Somewhere between the curtains of infancy and the shrouds of death, our existence ferments. Steeped in solipsism, our lives break apart like wet paper towels. Gently dabbing. Brittle. We tear away - forever victims of our embellished visions of the Up.

Like most endings, the roots are anchored for another beginning. Stories are churned out again and again. Characters eventually become compost, a decaying feed.

A man says to his son that the only way is Up. Banality stretches out right across their long and healthy lives until finally they die.

Branch by branch we are falling.

Into a desert...

