

[A]

Knees clacking against each other, fumbling in an idiotic darkness, careening a BIC lighter that he bought from a gas station to belay the hug of gloam (this would make his journey a little more gracefully, projecting his form towards a wall that would be linked to a socket for a lamp, or a switch to spring the upper fluorescents). Blundering around the flame, his brain queued the image of when earlier a moth stuck itself against his caravan's windshield. This memory laughed at him, in his mind's eye he imagined standing chiaroscuro in a wind tunnel, assaulted by sputtering moth fledglings shooting like scraps out of the shredder, matching each incline and contour of his face.

At the gas station—a skin-deep vivacious drone from the walls of milk and lemonade liquor, vibrating at the same meter as his forehead after sitting in the tin caravan for almost six hours...speakers gasping out twinges of Berlioz—he grabbed a jar of peanut butter, a soda pop and one of those kitschy candles with Biblical renderings imprinted on glossy paper. Saint Michael Archangel was seen with a blitzing kick propelled by his right leg, pulverizing the side of Beelzebub's skull. The candle in question was unusually gorey, and featured a splintered expression caused by paragliding teeth, ejected from the demon's orifice, it seemed that his wrists were blossoming with curdled blood from shackles that engulfed his spindle gleamed fingers. The gas station clerk had a glass eye, so identifying which pump that Subterranean Investigator Supreme Cable Blythe's caravan sat at was an effort of dodgy communication skills—detonating a bomb through a cup and string—. Cable Blythe's mother's third husband had a glass eye, and they went bird watching, so it felt that possibly this clerk felt a bit of a bitterness towards him, maybe half-way predicting that his purchase of Saint Michael was baked in some removed sense of irony towards religion. Either way the conversation didn't reach its intended conclusion until Cable realized, “Do you mind if I throw on one of those lighters as well?” it was the only BIC left, a banana cream pie yellow that had a frosted looking silver end where the flick was. It cost him a buck forty-five, and would come in handy as he constantly was thrown into making hasty client deals with cigarette smokers (Cable didn't like to admit it, but it felt so warm to have his coat pocket contoured to the weft and tactility of a pack of Black Nothings cigarettes, only eight left in the pack before he “quits”).

Now the butane trail ebbed a web of orange pale visions of the exoskeleton shapes that inform where a bed or a nightstand may rest. Cable Blythe's wafting of the torch in question sent alarm clocks and fistfuls of water glasses along with orange screwtop medicine bottles off the surfaces like shards of a flipped over truck—Cable had helped a semantics student, trapped under one of those eight wheelers for shipping palettes, who's wheel got removed by a self-aware sinkhole—'s windshield into roadside debris catch-alls. His feet would wrangle the misfortune of the lopsided mess, and Cable Blythe was like a carousel, cotton candy-like tornado, his movements similar to a being awoken to one's transformation from a biped to a quadped, newborn chimera-esque. Cable's shirt—he always wore the last layer to bed, if he was sun-damaged in the desert ravines he'd keep it to a white button-down and a plaid waistcoat, but the fog had begun to cast so he was working with a faded navy blue t-shirt that he received from an estate sale. A boy who had died in a fire that was just his proportions, terribly nasty thing, he had no stomach for it—had a loose thread sticking from an ember hole that caught itself on a nail, tugging him towards the wall. The spark of inertia shot Blythe, Cable Blythe, to his final resting place: finding the outlet. The slip of a finger caused the room to be soaked in a light resembling birthday cake mix, every form of his convulsions came into a clear rendering. Light spots weaved through his cornea, making the displeasure and pleasure into a incarnation of gumbo.

The roadside hotel, Pressure Point Inn, off the last exit before the Scorpio Heritage highway swirls into the Interstate 447, a road that is checkboarded with Cable's personal history, but typically he stops before Scorpio Heritage unhinges. Currently his demeanor towards the entire case is reflective in the fact that it is past two in the morning, Cable Blythe's roadnotes are precariously teetering near a glass of split sink water, his eyeballs placid with unrest, hopelessly stuck open. He laid there in a haze of seventy-mile per hour breeze and debris coalesced through his skin, the residual nicotine flavor now apart of his gums. Once he passed a sign for Mile 47 (400 more to Interstate 447), he cracked open the soda pop and that was all he can remember as far as hydration in the past handful of hours. Cable Blythe drilled forward his weight, firmly pillowed by the palms of his hands, against the stucco housing in an attempt to get his equilibrium attenuated. Yet the problem still lingered. He peeled through the flaps of his wallet, he found a crumpled selection of varied tender types, photograph of Lonex the Hero Dog (a novelty trading card that a kid at the caravan wash traded for a sip of his soda) and that felt like enough justification he required.

Using a handful of pebbles, the glass surrounding the window was all but stagnant, until he found a sizable stone, Cable smashed in the adjacent suite's window. Shrouding under veil of the seersucker jacket, protecting his flesh from emulating the hide of a cactus, he brought his shoulder plunging through the rest of the surrounding glass. He crawled into the suite and felt the firmness of their pillow, he said under his breath, "Plush and resistant," he tucked the sleeping slab under his arm and proceeded to return to his own room.

His key got jammed in the lock, but after a pretzelian twist, the wood peaked its way open into the fluorescent-clad, debris brushed, husk he left. Tossing the pillow down onto the mattress, he snapped the television on so he could have some white noise, it was almost three so re-runs of Lonex the Hero Dog's failed attempt at merchandise was running. The infomercial gloated the quality of Lonex the Hero Dog's dog cream, a specialty paste that you could mix into your dog's food that would give them increased virility, coat health, teeth whitening and oxygen intake. A final *click* of the overhead light provided the room a glittering teal hue, the spastic changes of shots created a walking pace of reds, blues and yellows to dance against the reflection of the stucco. Cable dug his torso into the insulation of blankets, pillows of varying firmness, until he was embedded like a stray Chaparral sapling in the wall of a mountain.

The phone rang like a gaggle of flies trapped in a tin can, the sun shot sword-shaped glints of daylight across the cuneate opening within his *tableau de couverture*. The passive sonic blue numbers on the clock read 8:45am, "I got all the fingerprint stains off my computer monitor, and you were right the smudges on the photo aren't distresses, it's just my screen. So yeah, if I were to date the photo it would be within the past few months,"

"Thomlin, did you find my hotel room number in a phone book? Can I call you back?"

"Well I'm calling because in about thirty minutes you're expected to be meeting with a lifeless corpse and a whole outfit of Interstate 447 highway patrol officers at the Smoke Stack Pancake House,"

"Oh shit, that seems incredibly demanding...you sure they need me? I'll probably just stain my shirt,"

"Considering that they're going to be your ride to Basket to investigate the Rocco case—"

"Does this pancake place have an electric kettle?"

"I'm sure they could boil some water for you,"

"Is that the perks of law enforcement?"

“You don’t think you’re getting free coffee do you?”

“Not anywhere on Interstate fucking 447, I’d sooner get a clean glass of water at your house—”

“How’s your current living situation?”

“The motel? I broke a window and I left the TV on all night. Now I’m watching that hour of Saturday morning cartoons curated by Lonex the Hero Dog...oh and I’m using the phone now to talk to you. It’s a dollar a minute, plus tax.”

“You need the address for the pancake place? Or did you already get the text?”

“I don’t want to check my mobile,” he grabbed a loose permanent marker off the nightstand, in red ink on the side of the pen it said NOT FOR USE ON SKIN, with pen-cap in his mouth he articulated, “here lemme write the address on my arm.”

[B]

What a goddamn wash it at all, Cable sat steering his caravan with a loose hand sticking out the slit of the window, creating some sort of tactile drag to prevent him from contorting the sleeve into his pocket to collect one of the seven remaining cigarettes. He showed up an hour later than they were expecting, with the whole floor being overgrown with honey, syrup and blood of the dead entrails in question. The other patrolmen present were all taking vigorous notes, while just standing latent to the actual evidence strewn about the floor like a landslide—curtailing patches of foliage (guts) and rivets of sand deposits (their tattered clothing and contents of their pockets) sitting amidst a slung boulder (the murder weapon...not being allegorical here, it really was a massive boulder)—. Cable tried stepping in to talk to one of the patrolmen, but there was a bee that kept flying right into his face, costing him any sort of dignity, alongside actual restaurant business still trying to be set in motion amidst the carnage, waitresses caromed past the aggregate of viscera and bureaucracy to deliver plates of fried eggs to twice-baked customers, who really could not see what trials they were setting forth for Cable Blythe. Any engagement between officers was stunted by the fact that if it were for not the pens and pads being tortured with bat out of hell penmanship, it would look like they were telepathically communicating through the crests of their heads. Just as Cable worked up the courage to scream at lack of police work, the press snapped a photo with a piercing white flashbulb.

He ended up leaving their with no indication whether or not the corpse was at all mutually exclusive to the Rocco case he was sent out to fucking Basket—a town farther out than Scorpio Heritage, farther out than Interstate 447 and who knows *how* many miles from Subterranea—for. Upon inquiry about the ride to Basket, the patrolmen all made googly eyes at each other, apparently that detailed slipped the envelope. Cable, in the process of starting his trek to Basket, picked up a co-pilot, apparently the attack was much more than what played out in his head (“I don’t know did some idiot spend his summer building a trebuchet in his garage, and decided to test it out by launching a cartoon-sized boulder into a breakfast joint?”), it was more like an unaccountable terraforming, an earthquake, but of very closed proportions. Only Smoke Stack shook on that day, rocks came unearthed from the ground and launched themselves in the air. The poor entrails on the ground was the only massive casualty, but there were some other pedestrians that felt the sharp sting of the quake. Cable’s new required friend was also trying to get back to Basket, his name was Blondie and his face was wrapped up in gauze, around his jaw it seemed like there was some form of cotton or adherence (it looked like he was wearing a cast on his face). “I really appreciate you being able to drive me back to Basket Detective Blythe,”

“Actually, I’m not a detective. I’m an investigator, which may seem like a semantic line, but I actually get in a lot of trouble—”

“I interview a lot of police officers, I write for the paper in Basket and they’re pretty open about just about anything they do,”

“When did you start writing Blondie?”

“Well, I at first—” the conversation got cut short due to a gust of wind toted the caravan a few inches off the ground, the vehicle landed safely with a *skid* and the luggage in Cable’s trunk doing a backflip.

“Shit you ok? Sorry about that—”

“Oh yeah, weather’s been odd,”

“Well I’d certainly agree, there’s something uncouth about the way that about ten years ago you could drive down this road and it wouldn’t need chains,”

“I have a friend that writes about the weather. He says meteorologically we’ve got to watch our backs—”

“It’s exactly that. We’re carbon exhaust pipes, in addition to using gunpowder to power...well this fucking vehicle we’re coasting down the road in. It’s all high impact velocity, some divorce from the primordial that just creates some plastic aggregate gunk,”

“You were asking about when I first became a journalist?”

“Oh ya, I mean get kinda started talking about something else, so ok—”

“I would be a little mind numbed rugrat who wanted to be an actor for awhile, but I went to audition after audition and there was never any real connection I felt with the material. I remember having this long—well long for a little kid—conversation with my mom, do you mind turning the heat off?, about something I found kind of anxiety inducing. So she encouraged me to y’know, follow my feelings, so I wrote a letter into the Lonex the Hero Dog community magazine. I keep it with me in my binder,”

Blondie proceeded to undulate each zipper on his zig-zaging briefcase until he pulled out a sagging, spilling accordion loose-leaf binder. All the flaps were compounded with what could be enough to fill a thesis paper, except one which only held the letter in question,

Dear Lonex Reads,

I am a viewer from Past Paradise, EA. I am only nine years old, but I’ve been watching your show as long as I can remember. You know how sometimes your head feels itchy and your toes don’t fit in your shoes right? I’ve got that feeling ever since the Lonex Network decided to oust Jabberwocky Mitch after his rheumatoid arthritis prevented him from making the daily craft. I don’t really think that’s very fair, both from a moral and legal point of view. I am both worried about the shows and people I love being taken off over medical issues. I hope you think about this and reconsider.

- Blondie, age nine 9

“I don’t ever remember reading that, I read that magazine until I was in high school,”

“Well they didn’t publish it. Which gave them a really interesting chance, to either put on their big boy pants and give some real bureaucratic decisions the fist of tenderness—”

“Now that’s a cute story, but they fired Jabberwocky Mitch because of the underground exotic pet market he had in his garage. He was breeding various types of tropical lizards in an effort to create a highly potent and eclectic dragon. Now that was his perspective, the reality of the situation being that it was essentially a forced sex dungeon for lizards. But the point you’re making with the whole letter is

valid, since you're now in the journalistic position, I take it you read all the letters? You give the people their full on damage?"

"Well of course, anyone with satellite TV knows about Jabberwocky Mitch's iguana fuck circuit. And back to your question, yes. I'm the best damn journalist in the county...too bad I can't report on this cause I couldn't see anything with all those rocks in my face."

Blythe ashed his cigarette against the window and took a drag that plumed throughout the resonant chamber of the caravan. "Did the gravel really come pissing out of the Earth? There wasn't some flight of Bvgerians?"

Blondie just sat in the caravan staring out at the bridge, looking over the landscape of rock formations, sporadic shrubbery and forestry plinths succinct against canyons and gorges, the winter air glazing over a gloss of moisture and a good argument towards an incoming snowpack. Trickling skylarks that climb arco from the branches of sycamores and fruit trees, all in a quarreling and euphonious union birthed along the craters and pockets of gravel amidst the roadside, sprinkled with debris and aggregate of the years of entrane fingerprints. Styrofoam food crates strewn like tinsel.

[C]

Cable flicked and twisted the laminate, a reflective sheen glistened off his corneas, he kept reading the unusually descriptive and easily dilenatable information back to the subject: Rodney Geranium Cormac Townes Rocco. This fake identification card came jam packed with every little glint that forms the quality of a genuine state issue, all three of Rodney Rocco's middle names (his mother was a poet who worked in a dictionary factory, where she didn't spend much time collecting words as much as she spent getting hot glue on her fingers, and the residual smell of leather trapped in her nose. Still wanted to make some sort of perennial mark of her kiss from language). "Why would anyone want to impersonate you Rocco? You're running one of the worst re-election campaigns I've had the displeasure of corralling a cabinet's worth of treason, laundering and corruption reports on. It's only a mayoral election, how in the hell it's fraught with controversy is beyond me, I was working on this case and I thought to myself, 'Oh...so he just lives like this?'"

"It's a mystery, I admit it Investigator—"

"It's Insp—Investigator, not Det—sorry, go on,"

"There's someone out there, trying to be me. Making a mess of my record," Rodney filled a glass with whiskey and a white curling foam on the top, the half-spilling, half-brimming beverage cascaded across the bar into the palm of Cable Blythe, "make it stop for me Blythe. Please, I need to do my job,"

Cable Blythe spilled the contents of the glass onto the counter of the bar, Rodney put his face in his hands. Cable transfixed his elastic eye-gaze to a ruminating circle of filth left behind by a baker's dozen of chilled glasses. It reminded him of Apritock where the sunbeams affected his mood, there were fresh lemons melting on the floor of every veranda, and water had gnat wings clustered on the staccato textured plastic bottle that hung like The Hanging Gardens in the the lounge of their headquarters.

"Rocco, or should I call you Rodney?"

"You sincerely have many names to pick from, I find it ultimately jury-less in you being able to pick what could be perceived as an 'inappropriate' one,"

"Ok Rod. I've had a form of breakthrough, or quite possibly a swirling—mind you it's still swirling—dehydration spell...and I've got to harken to that. I met someone once who told me to always

listen to my body, and the brain is another spongy, gelatinous skull trimming. So I'm going to leave and follow my nose,"

"Would you at least accept some sort of good will from me?"

"I am about to drive, so I can't drink too much. What is this place's palette of bourbon like?"

"I don't think they have any,"

"So what now?"

"Scotch—"

"Yuck, I'd rather drink out of the facet,"

"How about we try that beverage you toppled over again? You mind footing the bill, my old lady's only letting me out of the house with \$50,"

"That sentence gave me indigestion, but you're a client so I am bound to serve you and assist you in this, most likely, trying time. Order a Thanksgiving dinner if you'd like, I can write it off as bureau business, plus you're a mayor so we've got some good footing."

The beverages were catapulted and shot twists through their bloodstreams, Cable headed back to his caravan to let a small tape of harp music run its course as he poured caffeine and water into the familiar orifice. As the melody was about to reach a crescendo, Cable's body convulsed slightly, and he managed to catch the loose bile in his fist. The cadence of the movement arrived as Cable was able to find a receptacle for his wads of napkins and old receipts he used to clean his excess fluids. They both made the mistake of keeping things light with wine, only to have split more than a jeroam between them. It all felt so ridiculously hazy, how the time seemed to germinate around him, remembering water droplets against crisp twilight screen doors. Cable began gawking in the rearview having a monologue about the caravan's physicality and how it had been jostling and shuddering across the voyage, the event that most likely a frying pan or other cookware is being adhered to clothing items and toiletries. Pushing from his torso, Cable exited the caravan and undid the latch that opened the rear honch of the vehicle. His suitcases spilled out like tsunami leftovers, and for the life of him he couldn't remember why he was standing there. Cable adjusted the television antenna that beamed in transmissions of thoughts, dreams and stutters forward, propelling shockwaves into his nerve endings, in some vague hope that he would also recollect what he was telling Rodney Rocco in the bar just moments ago. He replayed the scene over again—a chilled glass of vermouth, next to cleared Pinot Noir, a pale sphere above the bar cacophony that reflected yellow reflective cautions of fluorescent into his corneas, his smoke shooting out gusts of stringy air...something about the Bvgeryans. Was Rodney Rocco a Bvgeryan? This would be something surely to write home about, after all a creature so heavily sedated and satiated by absorbing mass quantities of human bone would lead a midnight rambler out here unfurled. Amongst the coagulating piles of loose luggage, Cable fished out his mobile, he used the inner rotary to summon a familiar voice from the Subterranea. "Hey. Hope you are not in the middle of your night time ritual, but can I ask why I am in a town that's farther out than Interstate 447, with a man who formally—yet I don't exactly feel like he's what one could even mark with a dry pen as formal—is a politician in Scorpio Heritage?"

"Well Cable," Mazzy S., known in the department as the only officer allowed to have a gun, or anything that prescribed lethal force. Also one of the rare disciples of previous bureaus that actually picked up the little skill of answering their phone, "Rocco is fleeing what could be better known to people who aren't from terra-quaked, sunburned out lizard holes as, 'identity fraud'. And he has to lay low as he now has a criminal record."

“Criminal fucking record? Aren’t we cops? That not our department? It’s mine at least...uhm. He’s clear, I’m calling it,”

Mazzy had the unfortunate pleasure that was being the first person to have face-to-face interaction with Rocco. It was clear from the half-hour of sitting him in a room reading him his larceny, theft and vandalization charges, realizing he has no idea where or who half of the stores and victims in question even are. Alongside the monologue that really bought him out of any suspicion, “So if you have a guy, and he knows maybe how to iron a suit really well, or deliver the milk to all the right houses on the block, you give those people jobs respective to that. Something along those lines, point here being officers. And I call you ‘officers’ as a delineation of respect, not the way some kids walk around tossing watermelon seeds at you,” various times within his diatribe, Rodney Rocco would get into a hushed whisper voice that they would have to snap him out of, there could potentially be some substance to his whispers. But they were so quiet that the troop didn’t know if he was repeating what he whispered, or just carrying on into new ideas, “I could never commit these perqueries, on the very grounds that I endow a certain level, a tier if you will, of rever around here and if I was stealing cotton from Maiselle’s,” the charge was that he was stealing flour from Mikael’s, “or that I was driving a caravan through a school yard,” it was on the ground that his impersonator stole a school bus, he didn’t drive it through any yards, just had last year’s registration sticker, “I wouldn’t do any of these sort of things, because then, I would have to look at myself and say, ‘Rodney, what in the fuck are you doing? Drinking too much marmalade—an expression I borrowed from mother—, pissing in the frog’s mouth. Tricking the mailman, coloring outside the lines...” there came a point where the tirade became less of a personal jihad, and more of a vaudevillian circus of naming various incomprehensible metaphors and idioms. Also the police showed up to his office to see him sitting there, already handcuffed. He carries a pair in his back pocket for the key, not for the cuffs. In case anyone wrongfully gets arrested. He would have a journalist—who was there, and his always by his side constantly. His name is Blondie Brushwithdanger and he’s the best god damn journalist in the county—take a statement from him, which Blondie already memorized, “I am not only committed to be the hand that helps the community, but the hand that curls off the shackles.” Quaint.

“Well that seems like quite the day for you, but I am still lost on the whole criminality of the circumstance,”

“Scorpio Heritage’s long standing, ‘you break it, steal it, have intermarital relations with it,...you buy it’ mantra,”

Cable sighed and sifted through the amorphous pile of his things, “Oh delightful, I assume that the fake Rodney GCT Rocco also hit the Scorpio Heritage brothel, famous for their milkings,”

“Don’t be too cynical, it’ll only drag this into extremity. Now I was being nice, because while I do try to maintain an air of professional aloofness, I actually have some big time sympathy that you’re stuck in Basket. The worst part of Jonestown county,”

“Is that a jab at something, or am I really within an area known as Jonestown county?”

“You check your GPS?” Cable absolutely did fucking not, he hated the GPS, he thought the whole thing entirely unnecessary. The directions were by-and-by a life-saver, but it felt eerie that Mazzy, Thomlin and the other helium sucking affiliates in Subterranea could see him floundering. It was marketed as a fight against Bvgeryan nappings that carried off Investigators like sack lunches. The fear of the dark is always what brings a new piece of wire-clad viscera into Cable’s wheelhouse. “Alright, I’ll try

to get some sleep tonight. And I don't mean just lay there and think about pulling all my teeth out, I'll have a few dreams."

"Make 'em good ones Blyhte,"

"My name is Cable Blythe,"

"That's what I said, my tongue was just in the wrong position,"

"Mazzy...do you have an overnight guest?"

The line went dead and Cable chucked the phone into his pocket. A shape like a cross between an obelisk and a cheetah motioned toward him. Bvgeryan. "I don't have the best bones, you might wanna try back inside, there's all sorts of idiots."

The Bvgeryan just sulked its torso and curled back the hood that engulfed the circumference of its figure to reveal a shimmering, slot-machine like ball of Tetrisian hues, moving like the little innards of an amoeba, "I lost my passport and I need to get home, can you call the Bvgeryan union? They have my identity, I am one of the registered kin."

Cable hurled a spare cell phone in the direction of the Bvgeryan's tendrils, it used its resonant magnetic aura to hold the phone mid air, caught in a plume of upkicked gravel, lapped up in waves of wind and the oil gleam of stray Bvgeryan viscera that functioned like an unravelling caustic force against Cable's cool pose. The signal dialed, a language that was just out of Cable's reach was being spoken from the other line, but the Bvgeryan dialed 9 for English. On came a voice that sounded like a bird being smashed by a piano, the Bvgeryan carefully hearkened to from the other line then proceeded to press all 12 digits of its serial number in arrhythmic fashion. A black cloud came oozing out of the mouth of the phone, consuming the Bvgeryan until it's mass ceased to hover in its former place. The phone dropped, with a *clack* that felt tinny and concrete, like the falling of a pistol from Cable's rear right pocket. Cable used the phone he had in his front left pocket to dial the number of the one placid on the dirt. It buzzed and no specter crept out. Not a trap. He stashed the spare in his other pocket and started to pile all the laundry, devices and various ephemera back into the houch. He returned to the front seat and lit the fifth cigarette, this time calling one more person. "A Bvgeryan just asked me for help without even getting a bite of calcium, how's that for customer service?" He sat there and giggled at the other line's response, "...oh quite, that's something," the conversation lingered one-sided for awhile until the smoke was down to the nub. Cable flicked the morsel into the sky, "Ok, that sounds great. I have to get going, there's some ground to cover, police shit. But call me...always, anytime you want to you can call me." The line continued to drone, Cable's face twisted slightly, "Of course, give him my regards...definitely...if you would like to I'm sure...no I said if you would like to...ok." He pocketed the device after clicking out of the call. He pulled out another smoke, stared at its contours, the reverberations of tobacco glint, then he returned it to the pouch. Inside he could hear Rodney Rocco beckoning Blondie to hurry up in the washroom because he had too much to drink and needed to flush something out, also because Blondie was shouting about how they were playing twelve-tone music in the bathroom. 'Basket' was printed in white paste against a wood frayed sign that hung above the 35 mph speed limit.

[D]

As Cable Blythe was propelling his caravan out of the parking lot of a donut shop, the radio in his caravan started crackling like there were the cuticles of cats plucking at the waveforms. This aggravating tremolo persisted until he slung down the volume knob so he could pull over and shout at Blondie

Brushwithdanger, who was standing outside a boarded up grocery store, trying to pry off the front door with a crowbar, “Is the mayor in there?”

“What?” Blondie turned about face to see Cable’s face, intermittently spliced by spastic caravans in gauntlet traffic, “Investigator, I’m trying to get inside the bootlegger’s—”

“Blondie, speak louder,”

“Come on this side of the street,”

“Ok, but wait I want a Twinkie.” Cable parked the caravan and turned on the hazards, he walked amongst the jagged pavement over to Blondie’s side of the road. He smiled at the reporter then walked into the adjacent convenience store. Blondie resumed his task of trying to strip off layers of basala that were waterlogged, rust-tinged and sedated against the broken tempered glass that stood as a gate into the menagerie of sagged produce remnants and checkstand tumbleweeds. Cable emerged as soon as Blondie cracked the final layer, exposing a light spilling slit in the door frame. He chewed on the pastry, “I just had the worst cup of coffee. I swear their ideas about flavor infusion are seriously dilapidated, my stomach feels like all the food I put in there is in fucking retrograde now...anyways what’s the ruckus here,”

“Well remember how the mayor was talking to you last night about finding that guy that’s been imprisoning Bvgeryans,”

No, Cable didn’t remember, in his mind the mayor was admitting to *being* a Bvgeryan. Cable stuck a hand in his pocket and started frantically texting the Bvgeryan union he phoned about fifteen minutes ago to call off the hunt, “Yeah,”

“Well Carb Erator, the radio show host who first found the shaggy looking flea-clad mutt that would be groomed to serve as every kids inspiration, better known as Lonex the Hero Dog,”

“Are you reading me a passage from a book?” he turned his eyes up for eye contact for further edification, “Oh no you’ve probably just got something garbled with that whole earthquake incident—”

“Another Smoke Stack this week has gone up in flames, did you hear?”

“What was the prognosis?”

“Radioactive spires that launched from below the ground, they found a mutilated corpse of a drifter covered in hot dog meat in the freezer once all the dust settled,”

“Where?”

“Somewhere out by the East Area, that’s where I’m from. Apparently the guy is having his autopsy later today at their rec center. There’s a really new high trend in hands learning, bunch of biology students from the local denomination are going to dig through the flesh. The guy smelled like sulfur, there was a styrofoam carton of milk tied around his ankle. No one wants to fess up,”

“Cool, I remember my first embalming. What were you saying about the Bvgeryan lair?”

“Right! Here lemme tell ya what Carb Erator let us in on.”

Early Addendum to [D]

Blondie was pissing everywhere but the toilet at the first sound of John Cage being played over the tiny cordless humdinger in the bathroom. He started shouting the mayor’s name, begging him to hear this piece before it all wrapped up. He stepped out of the bathroom and hugged his body against the neighboring pool table, started drifting off to sleep making wads of spittle on the cloth. The back of his

neck was hoisted by a callused hand connected to the aging body of Carb Erator. “Blondie, what the fuck,”

“I was—”

“Drifting?”

“Fading. Slightly hemorrhaging—”

“Blood?”

“No...hemorrhaging shut-eye. I haven’t really slept much since the earthquake.”

Carb Erator sat placid against the counter top, twirling a ball of twine about the contour of a Kandinsky. Exploding out of the shimmers of his evening coat—Carb possessed only one jacket free from all moth holes. It was shedding on account of whatever thermoplastic was now beginning to wane—was a glossy paper, packing tape adhered to his breast which in curtailing cursive Sharpie read something like free-verse,

I can see how many god damn investigative hypocrites will turn the screw back to the hands of those who wish to unlock Bvgeryan’s zootropic shackles

“How many cents per word is my paper paying ya for having the editorials on your chest?”

Carb just shackled his chin skyward so he could blow the smoke emanating from a Black Nothing Natural Mint up into the crucified light fixtures. There were no more words spoken between them until Blondie grabbed the cigarette for a drag, Carb put his hand against the bar and tried to lift himself up, but only met the floor. He was bleeding out of the corner of his lips, Blondie sputtered from his stool to try to get Carb some attention. It seemed like the floorboards had expanded into a hump, horribly contoured cliff range, resting the splint between Carb Erator’s jaw. He was still breathing, but it came through sounding more resonant, with extra film and debris in the timbre. Three paramedics scrambled from the dartboard, which was now jutting out of the wall like it hung on the periphery of a spinal cord. The walls of the bar had twisted neon signs that looked hand sculpted under enormous pressure, the whole room became an aggregate inhale, like a charred rock had gone down the connected tube of the esophagus. Blondie scurried out of the front door, with Rodney and him in tandem handshake. Rodney sulked against the germaniums and the blue-green foliage peeking between crinkled gravel crevices. The whole lot in front of the bar had an evolving lush burst of sweet melon and bore enormous clusters of vines adorned by tropical emerald palms, stretching at each interval. Rodney Rocco’s gaze stuck anamorphic up to Blondie, standing in a unfurling congregate of buttonbush, “I think I stole somebody’s wallet,” he closed his eyes and tears melted his cheeks, “they’re going to put me in the big house.”

Rocco peeled open his palm to reveal a clip mangled with globs of bills, amidst business cards and the driver’s license of Carbitt Ernoch, better known as the grand uncle of Lonex the Hero Dog and the thrilling tale of rescue under dire circumstances. Carb Erator’s wallet was pruned by the duo, and revealed an uncanny resemblance between his ID and the falsified one tailor made for Rocco’s impersonator. They found pages ripped out of an address book, iconographic renderings of building layouts, an illustration of a long hallway categorized by alcoves of spilling wire viscera. Some unflattering business cards suggesting that Carb Erator is not above ignoring the cries of a few restless waifs in the Lonex the Hero Dog Family Reconnection Community for the favor of supplanting new meat in the penitentiary system. Finally they came upon a mirror, a thin crack down the middle, with a scrawled address for something that Carb filed as

WHEN I NEED A NEW ME

“Blondie, do you remember when we drove down to the edge of the county, and that crop duster told us about Bvgeryan tears?”

“Were you not talking to Investigator Blythe about the alleged Bvgeryan being held prisoner in someone’s basement for harvesting these tears?”

Rodney brushed the IDs of Carb and himself in his hands, remembering the vivid pictures meant to hum cleverly in their mind. Bvgeryan tears are seedlings to larger outcrops of serotonin muscle flexing inside germinating pools of an entrals grey matter. They possess a sheen similar to cauterized plastic, or dried fruit concentrate.

[D]

“This is the address on the mirror? Are you sure this isn’t part of a larger design?”

“I don’t take Carb Erator to be someone to glued in controversy. I think he simply was a victim of supply and demand,”

Cable fidgeted with a smoke in between his fingers, undulated the rivets of the burning end that was starting to flicker with each thud of his thumb. “Blondie I think I’m going to go in there, and I think you should probably go home and drink a soda or something,”

“Caffeine this early gives me a hyperactive neurosis...so I think I’ll just have some carrots and read the funny papers,”

“Give me Carb’s wallet, I wanna know all the gorey details,”

Blondie reached into his pocket, but his other one adjacent to his inner thigh began to vibrate. He looked at his mobile, “The autopsy has been postponed because the rec center’s floors began to ooze black tar...sorry,” he forked over the clip.

They nodded a gratitude to each other and motioned towards opposing directions.

[E for Entrale]

Cable glanced over his shoulder occasionally to see if the trails of light that sunk against his shirt were cast from the portal opened by Blondie, or from any fixtures that were still ticking on the inside. A dust trickle made a diagonal succession that filled the empty space contained by the slivers of white luster. He found stairs that lead forth at a corrugated maw of the dark sinkhole ahead.

Cable was hanging upended with his head clocked at the edge of the stairs, and his boot twisted in a mangle of copper conglomerate. He freed his foot so he could slide gracefully to the base of the stairs, where he noticed a beam shooting out from under a doorway, he sauntered towards the beckoning signal and heaved the gate open. Carb’s illustration matched with the elongated body of the hallway, that stretched down to a pin out of Cable’s field of vision. Each alcove was upset with wires, tangles and loops of upturned simulacra of flex. Digging through the one adjacent to his left, Cable uncovered credit card terminals, privy with laminate coaters and handheld scanners. There were rows and rows of particular evidence that the machines possessed hyper-electronic energy, and were churning almost to the point of voltage snap. The wires lead to terminal boxes, which had cut out insides that beamed together a laundry line of connections, almost Sisyphean to no source—Cable felt like he was trying to restart the lights on the Xmas tree—. A booming shudder came like a pan being smacked against a drain pipe, it grew more intense and with more rapid attacks. Cable lurched forward in shock, some bile shot from the corner of his

mouth, his hand erupted from its placid position by his side—it was too late though, he already coughed up quite the wad—. Cable fumbled for his pistol, which must have fallen out of his right rear pocket, so he took to his feet. He scrambled past alcove after alcove, there came a point where the minute differences started to turn into a slideshow of elaborations. Cable caught his breathe, stuck between two cubbies that each were adorned with mirror shards, one which caught Cable's eye featured a distortion of the image he saw so familiar. His flesh appeared bumpy and his eye was sunken past the periphery of concave skin. The next alcove revealed poster glossy prints of different surveillance camera footage from different corners of the store, pictures of Cable's feet and his hands whirling against the alcove walls struggling for balance. He found a portal at the edge of a sloping incline of tattering shelves that burst at the balsa wood seams. Scaling over credit card machines and bust wires and copper viscera he crawled through the opening.

Inside he found a beaming red gloam, curving portamento towards a tin flavored set of spindle stairs with several platform landings. As he cascaded the lights grew more palatable, the sound of a familiar drone over an intercom

THE NEXT BUS ARRIVE IN TWENTY-ONE MINUTES. ONE CAR ARRIVING AT TERMINAL G HEADING TO SOUTHTOWN, NOW BOARDING

in some unknown form of transportation he must've wound up in a bus station, or there was some remedial electrical connection between the station and this ever-expanding building. The final landing lead to a passageway made from a sheared piece of polyethylene. Cable peered through the passageway that gave him a sedated sense of the silver gleamed agent that sat before him. It was twisted aggregate and syrup glazed compact of black leather and polished metal that tied the malnourished Bvgeryan against the concrete-clad base. Cable's eyes began to ambulate at the event seated before him, his vision corroded by the fact his face beamed pockets of sweat in the presence of the something only drifted upon by investigator's rumors: tears of a Bvgeryan. Cable motioned his right arm unstuck from his pocket, he twisted the fabric until his forearm was completely bare and lent it towards the Bvgeryan, seeing if it would contort to the scent of his bones. It lay dormant, until it spoke, "I can't eat. My stomach hurts."

Cable blinked a few times too many, "I have something that could help you, but I need to know what happened and why you're crying."

"I was dreaming," it sounded hollow in a whisper, the voice of the Bvgeryan was much thinner than the one that borrowed Cable's mobile. Cable pulled out his Black Nothings, he sparked the cigarette, took a long drag and placed the butt at the periphery of the Bvgeryan's maw. It plumed until the roach reached to the abdomen of the cigarette, it spoke in twisted intonation, "I feel warm, but I still can't remember my dream,"

Cable tried to filter in his mind all the questions he needed edification towards, the endless sea of how and why and what he was doing in the swamp belly of this dilapidated Thrifty Retailer. Why there were wire-clad simulacra machines sitting ratking amidst the mess of glossy poster paper and fluid mirror halls. Bvgeryan tears and the fake identity cards of the mayor, all he could muster was, "What did you see before you started to dream?"

"The Bvgeryan union, drifting waves of lacquer and chocolate candy stew... I was eating an entrale and then they made me say my name,"

Cable pulled out Carb's clip, he peeled back the other business cards until he got to a torn piece of cloth—surmounted from a Lonex the Hero Dog flag—on the frayed material he spoke a phrase of garbled letters and pseudo-characters. The Bvgeryan heaved and sputtered up a batch of smog, "The

golden scissor that floated above me,” Cable remembered when he was a kid, he ate a chocolate bar that he found in between the couch cushions called Golden Scissor. He never found one like it, “it said harsh words to me. I should keep dreaming, for the world has to make new arrangements, to cough up primordial epistrophes that speckle itself. The world belongs to the mother overgrowth, bearing the Bvgeryan albatross,” the Bvgeryan coughed more, its mouth now serrated from the bits of loose bone that slipped past at high velocities. Cable lit another cigarette and held it to the Bvgeryan, “the golden scissor cuts the umbilical from the intangible. That’s what I saw in my dream, I would be nailed to the crucifix,” Cable gazed past the chains that dangled beyond his periphery, to the cast iron wrought against the wall, covered with zipties and threads of yarn holding the chain there, “for the birth of the Bvgeryan flight into the cotton clouds. I began...I will now weep,” the drops hit the point of Cable’s boot, “because I’m sorry about what I saw.”

“Don’t be sorry, about anything,” Cable thought about making another phone call in that moment, he saw himself sitting alone in his caravan telling himself he didn’t need another Black Nothing, “just dream Bvgeryan.”

“I saw the entrals. Entrals as only an addendum, something that could be revised...and then I woke up to my tears scraped off and spread like paste on card laminates,”

Cable took the cigarette from the Bvgeryan and took a drag. He looked in his pouch and saw only one remaining...he opted to leave it stagnant. The darts of shooting synapses coursed through his mind as to ask the Bvgeryan more, but when he leaned to return the cigarette, (the Bvgeryan looked at him with the globe that erupted between it’s black curt skin and empty space, “Things are going to be different,”) their lips met and he kissed the Bvgeryan.

Black, orange integers of pulsating light convulsions soared past Cable’s medulla. Negentropic serotonin bubbles corralled around each tendril of his nerve endings that shot from his face to his sharpened—now sculpted to have a resonant peak—shoulder bones that connect to his metal rod spine. The other end of the telephone line stood before him, this time they were calling him, he just wanted to listen for awhile. He closed his eyes all the way back in his head. The gong-ing sound of the pan was closing in on him, he stared at the now empty space where a Bvgeryan previously sat, and he darted through the plastic rift. Up through the trolley station stairs Lonex the Hero Dog’s theme song blasted like currents of formant shifts in the residual space junk atmosphere. Through the upper levels the machines whirred in a sawtooth chorused hum like a bug trapped in Cable’s ear, he looked for the Bvgeryan. What lay in front of him was the stoic embodiment of an entrals with their body mutilated from head to toe. Covered in a dripping meat, suffocating a pool filter breath that reverberated past the drone of the machines. Along the lines of their bone structure, were staggering crops of wires and foliage. Each opening had a tendril creeping out, the vines were reaching out and the wires were zipping. He headed for the stairs that once brought him deeper into the cesspool, and escalated.

[1]

Cable Blythe emerged from the wooden vestibule to a sidewalk deconstructed by the melange of tropical fruit trees, long strawgrass and colorful varieties of poppies and posies. He shifted through the weeds that were poking the holes in his pants and trying to careen into his pockets. His mobile buzzed, there was a text message that read he was going to Subterranea to investigate the disappearance of an investigator, he’d be meeting with their local staff of Subterranean Investigators Thomlin and Mazzy. He

checked the signatures in his last emails to see they were all signed BASKET INVESTIGATOR SUPREME CABLE BLYTHE . Standing dressed in corduroy and wearing a plaid button-down, Blondie Brushwithdanger was at the surrounding of the doorway that Cable emerged from, “Oh good, you already have the address of the pancake house you’re meeting the chief at,”

Cable felt puzzled until he looked down at his arm to see the smudged address he wrote days before of the Smoke Stack Pancake House where the destroyed entrails laid. He felt intoxicated, lopsided and a perpetual sense of static, to alleviate he reached into his pocket and found eight Black Everything cigarettes waiting for him.