

NIGHTWATCHER

The true horror of existence is primarily reflected in the fact that our consciousness will be, in the inevitable moment, completely lost, dispersed in the endless arms of the abyss that surrounds this existence, and digests it slowly. And that will happen very soon, as soon as death comes, and there it is, peeping from around the corner!

Identity as such, even if it consisted of the slightest spark that speaks of some self-existence, is the last fortress of being for which we fight without pardon. The greatest fear is undoubtedly the dissolution of consciousness to the point of not recognizing oneself. More excellent than the fear of death or the fear of the unknown because, at the end of the day, we all still believe that even in death, we will somehow manage to keep any form of existence and that our consciousness and a good part of our memory will remain when we cross over. Even if that's the case (and I assure everyone that it's not, damned I be, I'm just lurking from there!), the poor human specimen harbors faint hopes and sluggish illusions of some afterlife. There is no carefree afterlife. It's all a big fat lie.

There are no plans or fulfillment. There is no posthumous beating of an invisible heart, at least not in the way it is casually assumed. And, as far as the fear of the unknown is concerned, I confidently assert that it becomes

utterly minor once one understands the size of the dark space of Meon, then when one begins to fight for that last bit of consciousness, for a piece of salvation that will confirm and prolong identity, even if only in the truncated form. Existence is pure horror, which comes from the inability to perceive the greatness and cold disinterest of the other side that meanders through us every moment like some cursed constrictor snake. All human efforts to create systems of reasoning, logical statements, or even intuitive insights are only raising fragile dams against the onslaught of the flood of hostile misunderstanding, and the monstrous waves of primeval blackness sweep away all of them.

Blackness. Black matter and the death of everything contained in it. The death of all kinds of possibilities waiting to be actualized according to the principle of chance by the mere incident. Life is a cosmic incident that water bags on bones experience through the system of prisms that comprise the human, all-too-human apparatuses of cognition. To hell with them!

However, not so long ago, human habits dragged me beyond the limit of perception. The entire known world, and for that, I certainly have to thank some forms of life that I will mention by the way, because I don't want to give an insight into knowledge whose pursuit someone will perceive as pure adventurism, or spiritual escapism, and embarking on the path of one's destruction. I'm not doing it out of charitable or humanitarian motives. Of course, I

don't want all kinds of simpletons to interfere in the secrets of the black sky. My testimonials are only for those particular characters. These night owls have a unique perception to thank for relinquishing focus and surrendering to the disinterested observation of the universe around them. And yet, it is worth noting that looking innocently at phenomena generally considered beautiful and admired can lead such an individual to ruin. Let's take, for example, the beautiful night sky, dotted with myriad colorful lanterns. The sheer beauty of the scene awakens the infinite joy in almost every uncritical spirit, even religious reverence. Still, to the wise observer, the realization appears as a counterweight when looking into a vast space full of corpses of long-dead stars and celestial bodies, images of the scene of many bloody cosmic battles for which little the human race will ever hear. Moreover, it is not far from the truth of the assertion of certain esoteric scholars (I belonged to one of such circles during my human life) that all the curses and chains of suffering that have befallen the human race come precisely from the blackest depths of the starry sky. As we examine the beautiful picture of the forms we perceive at the primitive level of perception as constellations, we observe our executioner, who sneaks up on us from the shadows. He is not only lurking from the sidelines but is approaching to slaughter us, like a lamb that, before the final moment, is still lovingly watching its executioners. Beauty is cursed, and Venus' fetters are the heaviest, as has already been said.

Nothing can lower the guard and disable the defense mechanisms like the sight of the unprecedented beauty of nature, the human body, the starry sky...

Measured in human time, the series of events I am about to describe happened relatively recently, just a few moments ago; however, where I am, it could have happened at any time. Indeed, the temporal loops and their curvatures are impossible to understand, even by the dim dwellers of the pre-Meon realms, such as the black desert Melasina and its many poison-filled ponds. Connecting the silvery cobweb threads that only lead to some understanding of the movement of time is not always the most straightforward task; quite the contrary.

After the last heavy emotional clash, which led to a combination of depression and PTSD, my life took a turn for the worse. I'm sure the official diagnoses were caused by something that contacted me in a particular way. Still, it was impossible to explain it to the doctors without the risk of depriving me of my freedom for a while. I was old enough that I could no longer consider myself young, and yet I was not one of those old men to whom the soulless mass of human damnation admits no ardor in the search for a little more of life's pleasure. Halfway between life and death, and closer to the latter, was a path I walked more confidently. I did not lack the means to maintain a relatively high standard and independence during that final

retreat from social events and people in general. It was an ideal situation to leave forever, cross the threshold of the invisible realm, and disappear, leaving no trace in this society of clowns and all kinds of impostors.

A certain melancholy, surrendering to endless emotional spirals that all ended in the grave, as the only tangible solution, was the prevailing condition, and the smell of wet loam began to create itself in the nose, even at the faintest thought of the most trivial pleasure. I was sick to death, sick of death, and in death, I hoped to find salvation. Of course, it's not the same when it comes by itself because the fact that we don't even control that event creates intense frustration. The realization of the latter that my end could come suddenly, without any influence of my will, ignited in me hatred towards everything human and burned the last traces of humanity in my being.

My long nighttime walks became increasingly frequent. As time passed, I went out more often in the dark to walk among the shadows whose erratic movements I began to understand (oh, yes, how profoundly shadows can talk when you listen to them!). Usually, the evening would start with me sitting on the terrace for a long time and watching the changes in the surroundings, then resolutely going out into the dark as soon as I felt the call of some vague sensation. In confirmation of my theory, there were more and more of those sensations. When you completely close

yourself off to the perception of the solar type, you discard all the false optimism that comprises the corpse of nature's body, one that, in life, has already begun to stink of rotten flesh, leaving room for deep insights straight from the heart of unadulterated darkness.

That night, I again visited the apartments of former lovers, friends, relatives, work colleagues, and people from other chapters of my life. In some of them, the light was still on every night, as if they were waiting for me, although I knew it was impossible. They all gave me up a long time ago, hurt me, and spat me out like a piece of cartilage in the middle of a fine chunk of meat or as a mistake that was a bone in their throat. Still, among them lay the stunted dream of long-forgotten humanity that had drained from me all along. I had to eliminate that last bit of humanity to reach my goal quickly and pass into non-existence forever.

I heard somewhere that people come back to earth, even after many deaths, to untie the knots of karma. That's what they called it. I didn't know much about it, but something always stank in such formal explanations. Although I am an organized and systematic person, I decided not to leave anything to chance, because what I consider stupidity may be the truth. Who would know what the truth is? It is a concept that forever abolishes and differentiates the freedom and primordial nature of the beast from that of man, the beast within man. You need to be practical and prevent karma from appearing (if there is

such a thing, to emphasize again), and for that occasion, I have seen only one adequate way. From that moment, many lights in the apartments I visited at night went out so that they no longer bothered me, did not hurt my eyes, and caused unpleasant floods of memories of my past life.

Most of my friends have been gone for a long time, and most of them died prematurely due to that inexplicable wave of violence that swept over the city. If only I had enemies, at least one. Then I realized that I was wrong about that, too. There were enemies, but they were cunning, and I was too relaxed.

Then I realized that I was being followed. They tracked me down repeatedly. The first few pursuers weren't a problem for me. They were somehow too human and, therefore, infinitely predictable, and their methods and weapons did nothing to reassure me that I was in danger. As for the others who made eerie figures out of the dark mass of dense shadows that surrounded the buildings, they scared me. Moreover, I cannot describe the horror that came over me when I confirmed my suspicions. Every night, they were getting closer to me, and I was getting more tired; I was so exhausted that on a couple of occasions, I could surrender to the persecutors. It's not that I knew exactly what was waiting for me then, but the fear of some dissolution became too clear to me right then. After all, I was still man enough to fear the other nightmares that didn't prey on my body, mind, or anything

else, which had long ceased to be any noteworthy inventory; no, they were chasing the last bits of my consciousness, the little atom of identity that was the previous instance of being.

I gave a lot to become this creature of the night, endlessly dehumanized and ready for anything, extraordinarily romantic and heartless at the same time. Still, I don't give away the last mentioned. I worked hard to become just like that. And I'm afraid the horror that overwhelms me is a thousand times worse than anything a human could fear. Did I, in my escape from humanity, reach the essence of humanoid existence and become even more human, the last stage of spiritual evolution? But such a thought is far more terrifying than anything I could think of. It was clear to me that in extreme cruelty lies the last secret and seed of human nature. I was sure there was nothing of value in moral and similar systems, which always served only to secure an unattainable advantage over the rest to the brighter and more prosperous. All religions, occult systems, humanistic theories, and various ethics were nothing more than multicolored lollypops in the store of colorful lies of humanity.

However, after realizing the humanoid's true, fully evolved, and beastly nature, I wanted to keep it. The feeling of superiority over other people was a too-strong addiction, like the finest drugs, and I didn't want to give up that last pleasure in the world. I fought for it with all my might, and now I was persecuted from two sides because of it. Human

pursuers were no problem for me. I was superior and superhuman compared to them, and I could predict their every move; I read all their plans, and as a punishment, I covered their homes and families in black and spread sadness throughout the city. If they were more imaginative, they would recognize in me a true messiah who helps them realize their true nature, but these people are infinitely stupid and miserable. What scared me, however, were the shadows still. I knew that they wanted to take away my superior humanity, to strip me of the crown of the dark lord of the world who sowed misery and suffering among former comrades in a prison of social constructs.

I'm not even sure what I want at this point. Should I surrender to those human persecutors and their combination of superstitious mantras and modern weapons? I know they probably won't harm me, and even if they did, I'm sure I'd have that little bit of consciousness left that they couldn't kill, which would, at that point, be wholly exposed to much worse predators. Did I not want to die, and I wished for death so much, hoping for it like a desert rain, even the toxic one? It would be even worse for me if both groups could catch up with me and do the damage.

Oh, how foolish I was in my arrogance to think that my newly acquired bodily invulnerability could save me from my pursuers. Well, they just excelled at that mission! The transmutation failed, and black alchemy was just as

rubbish as its white cousin. Useless gold, without the possibility of genuine change, every evolution is a blind alley, and in the end, they wait for the hordes of shadowy creatures from Meon. Now I know that I cannot go beyond the limits of this world and remain who I am, what I worked and fought for so much. I also know that they will not let me go because they saw that I was dangerously close to the border.

I can already feel the black sand of Melasina entering my nostrils, steaming my palate with its sharpness. There it is in the lungs; I can hear how each alveolus bursts under the sharpness of the other side of existence while dissolution takes place at the cellular and subatomic levels.

Jump over the border. How do you open a rift in time? How do the cursed beings come to pass over and harvest happiness from people, killing their loved ones and sowing untold sorrow in a world of false optimism and base joys? Did they come after me because I dared to do their job? Weren't they offended by that? How to please them?

I have to throw myself into that damned place that I have only visited in my dreams and see only a fraction of the horror that the vast desert carries with it. In it, hurricanes and tornadoes blow constantly, and the rare rains are acidic. The oases are full of black, oily liquid, the concentrate of a thousand venomous snakes and scorpions, and the great Zyphtos forest at the very end of the desert is the home of those who are now haunting me. Life Reapers,

Shadow Scourge, Manteaus, and Eidolons, by whatever name I call them, the horror they carry is unmentionable at its core.

I'm unsure how I ended up in the sandstorm or how long I've been walking this wasteland of non-earth. I only know that for a long time, I have been tempted to drink from one of those powerful sources of black poison and thereby dissolve into sand, becoming thousands of the same grains that have no trace of human record in them, particles of pure emptiness, the curse of negative existence. In the distance, I can see the slopes of the forest, but I know that a straight line is nowhere near the shortest way in this place. Moreover, if I had started like that, the direction would have led me straight to disaster. Here, you have to listen to the sand and follow the movements of the grains, fit into their currents, and wait for the wind to carry you to your destination, which can take an eternity, although that term means nothing here. If I am right, I may have already become a grain of sand, but I can't have self-awareness. Perhaps I am one of those grains that shine like shy fireflies in the middle of some black harvest, and as such, I know very well how I will fare as soon as the wind blows me to the forest. They live there, yes, the shadowy ones.

The incantation and the circle they created around me, the commotion and distraction, were enough for the shadows to catch up with me. The damned fools thought that human

goodness had triumphed over evil, as they called me, when in fact, it was a mere coincidence, like everything that happens in the universe. They celebrated all night without realizing that Chaos had triumphed again and that I was watching them from a particular place where I presented them with far greater danger because now I was free from the body and everything corporeal. Now, I am the master of the particles of consciousness, dead and unextinguished, eternally pursued, but also someone who has learned to outrun the pursuers. Just as one must blend into the sand to become a grain and travel safely anywhere, so it is possible to blend into the shadows and become of the same material of infinitely flexible form, whose essence rests in the middle of one of Meon's corridors, and whose black arm extends to the world of people.

Now I'm something else, and for people, I'm a shade, but not like the shades they're used to, but far more fatal to the damned kind. I am the one who looms over your babies in their cradles while you sleep, the one who takes your breath away when, in the pitch black, you notice an irregularity in space. The one that comes when Morpheus overpowers you and runs a death caress over your quivering body while your sleeping mind sends images of the cold wind from the open window and all kinds of strange creatures you never knew existed. Now I am in your dreams; I tell you, your dreams are not yours. You are right when you say that some dream images are impossible to produce from the simple

combinatorics of forms obtained from experience, for I am sending you each of those horrible visions of some of the many hells that await you when you die. At the same time, I capture pieces of your consciousness every night when you fall asleep in unique dungeons whose echoes you feel more and more as your death approaches. I am Nightwatcher. I follow the trail of the trembling of the human race and feed on the essence of existence, which is fear.