

### 3. LUCKY'S

#### CATHY FROM C WARD

As I became more part of the Restless scene, we started to infiltrate the back porch. Sometimes I would wait out there until I was dragged into conversation. I could be a willing participant. Other time, I would listen and smile. We held to the perch of the night and contemplated life on the street.

–I'm going to miss math class tomorrow.

–I suppose that we're all going to miss something.

–I don't want my youth to just slip by.

–Is it?

Cathy had slept with Kevin. She left a tape over there with the hope that she could have an excuse to make a trip back.

–I don't think that I fit his proper family background.

Cathy put on a sophisticated accent.

–You're not going to get your tape back.

–I know. He's a prick.

–Did he offer you drugs?.

–I think that I helped him out.

She was majoring in math, and minoring in street troubles. She was ready for a basket full of those. Terry would eventually take her under his wing, almost as Infra had done for Anastasia. I was hoping that she would use her analytic skills to undercover the secret patterns of this place. She wanted to offer her help. But her own mysteries were too involved.

–We promised no stories. But I'm getting good at cleaning up my own messes.

–Don't you like school?

–I did. I like the temperament. But I'm not set out for the lifestyle.

–What's the difference?

–Whatever it is, I'm not good at.

–Do you really like it here?

–They all know that they're phony. I have to play along to get drugs.

–That's why you're here.

–They could take the DJ's here and throw them out the window.

She was brutally frank.

–I can push.

I think that she liked the attention that she got here. On some weekdays, there were only a few women here. Cathy made a delightful addition as she played into the absurd fantasies of the queens.

–Yeah, I'll dress in a bunny suit.

Her humor was self-deprecating. She didn't nothing to alleviated the bite marks.

–You are the breath of fresh air that we need.

She was new blood. She was keeping it all for herself. For now, she radiated health.

–Someday, there will be something that you want, and you won't be able to have it.

- I'll learn how to enjoy what I have, and end up creating what I do want.
- That sounds noble!
- I have my ways.
- Will that be enough.

## DORY MEETS THEA

Dorothea had walked away from the security of her family in a small Georgia town. Her father was a prosperous business person. He had even had a brief political career. But his ambitions started to catch up with him. He had engaged a shady associate, and this only complicated his situation.

-Dory, your Mother never came in to this room. I don't see why I should make an exception for you.

-You still can't let down your guard. Even after she's gone.

-You're being too hard on me. I have rules to protect you, to protect me.

-This isn't any good for you. It's no good for me either. If you keep secrets from me, you're going to end up having to keep secrets from yourself. This is the sort of thing that ate Mother up. It destroyed her.

-Constance knew what she was getting into when she married me.

-You're losing touch with who you are—your ideals.

-I can do all this for you. I can make you money. It's half-legal.

>>People who no one care about. They're better off dead. I'm doing the community a favor. I can pass some business your way.

-I have to preserve my image for the public. It's all that I have.

-I won't get in your way.

Things became strained with his associate Harris.

-I'm not going to give you the recommendation.

-What?

-I've warned you about the SEC investigation.

-You're not serious.

-This is not a nation of haters. This is the new South. The last thing that we need is interference from the feds.

-I told you that I had things in control.

-It's not like we're engaged in anything illegal.

-But it doesn't look above board.

Dory had passed by her father's office just in time to eavesdrop. She hoped to hell that her father wouldn't have to sell the business. Worse if he was sentenced to jail for his activities.

-You're going to have to tell your story to the police.

–And I’m going to keep telling everyone?  
 –I just don’t want any of this coming back to me.  
 –You are involved up to your gills.  
 –There’s nothing at all that you can pin on me.  
 –I’m going to bring you down with me.  
 –You’ve undermined all human trust. You have absolutely no dignity. And now you want to drag me down with you.

Dory approached her Father.  
 –I know how this is destroying you.  
 –This is not your affair.  
 –I can help you.  
 –This is my business. If I’m ever incapacitated, it may be yours. But until that time, I make all the decisions.  
 He was isolating himself with nowhere to turn. If Harris was dangerous, he was desperate.

–You can’t let it bother you. This is not about guilt. I’ve done what had to get done.  
 –People like you don’t follow the rules.  
 –You hired me to get things done.  
 –I just don’t want to know about it.

–You tried to set me up. You know that I would be your point man.  
 –I’m not like you. I don’t cut corners.  
 –You benefitted from all my cutting.

–We could siphon some of the money to religious organizations. Its gets us off the tax hook.  
 –If you mess up, you’re going to spend some real jail time.  
 –The only thing that we’re fighting for is something neither of us can have.  
 –This is the land of opportunity! There’s loads of money floating around for us to take.  
 –Does that mean taking the people with the money?

–What is this stuff?  
 –Just a few things I want you to go over before I have to head for New York.

–We’re getting ourselves in a tricky situation with the SEC. My friends in Washington tell me we’ll have no problems. But I really wonder whether they’re correct. When the shit hits the fan...  
 –This takeover isn’t going well.  
 –There’s some people that I’d like you to talk about for me.  
 –I might need a little help.  
 –Money.

- We'd have to hide the money trail.
- I don't want to go down for money-laundering.
- You don't know a thing. You have a legitimate business.
- I want to keep it that way.
- Just keep your eyes on that daughter of yours. I think that she has her own ideas.
- She is my daughter.
- I'm having trouble getting anything done with her around.

-Consolidated International of White Plains is engaged in a takeover of Manufacturing General of Westchester.

- There's no trail that leads back to my operation.
- I think that the bankruptcy laws will make it easier to acquire one of the local textile firms.
- The textile firm isn't a good investment. It's facing stiff overseas competition.
- We're trying to acquire it for its pension funds. Of course, we'll shut it down.
- It's the pensions of the workers.
- But it will help us finance our other deals.

- You're as cool as a cucumber. I don't really like that in a man.
- When I see something that has to be done I just go out and do it.
- That mess that you created is worse than doing nothing.
- When I was a kid, my Daddy took me on a hunting trip. I had the doe in my sites. I didn't blink an eye. You just don't know how to pull the trigger.
- The moment you cross that line, you're up for grabs.
- You'll do what you have to just to survive.

Dory had to get out before things exploded around her. She knew her father's type. He would end up blaming her. With his mismanagement there would be nothing left.

-I could have helped you!

Somewhere along the line Dorothea fissions into two: Thea and Dory. Different backgrounds. Different stories.

THEA: I thought that I was Dory.

DORY: I thought that I was Thea.

- You can meet, but you mustn't dare touch. The universe could be destroyed.
  - That's nonsense
  - It might have made more sense when I was still important. Now Kuke has taken my place.
- Dory had made her amends to Kuke. But the internal rivalry was hardly at an end.

DOROTHEA SURRENDER THE END IS NEAR!

–The witch has finally found you, Thea  
 –I think the message is for you, Dory.  
 –If the slippers fit, then wear them!  
 –It’s your fairy tale.

–I just need to get obliterated so I don’t have to think about this sort of shit

Indiana, Iowa, Georgia—what story fit? Did we need two characters to do what one could do just as well?

–You’re playing with my life.  
 –And my death.

## THE INITIATED

They found the trail to Restless more appealing now that the night was favored over the day. They waited for tracks by the Sisters of Mercy and Ministry. They had been observed at the Cube. But the night was not yet fully ascendent. It was a moonless sky!

Bridget, Nan, and Ty thought this would be a great time to go out. They would have to deal the hassles of a weekend disco set. They also didn’t give much credibility to the social machinations that dominated Restless.

–We enjoy the music.

I had seen Bridge at loads of shows. She seemed to be one of the more knowing and intense fans. She transcended the bands and created a movement on her own. Bridge claimed that she knew all the Initiated in the Southeast. Nan had come up with the name. Bridge told her that it sounded like a biker gang. She knew enough Biker’s in Daytona. But Nan hated to say *death rockers*. It made her musical taste sound too narrow.

At Metropolis some of the hardcore punks were afraid of Bridge. They recognized her depth. They thought she could cast spells on them.

–One kid complained about his hair falling out. It was something that she did.

Bridge’s tastes were more catholic than many of the death rockers. She came out of a scene with varied influences. It was not dominated by the whims of the moment. In front of her were two generations of the movement. One had just started to frequent the clubs. The other still watched intently from across the street. They had their fires burning through the night! It was warmth during the winter, and power in the summer.

It was as if Bridge gave advice to everyone. That was not strictly the case. More often than not she was a helpless witness to all the self-destruction. But she was a stubborn pillar against the scene’s demise.

–Sure. I’ll party. But I need to stay sane.

Nan offered her the support that she needed. Nan had an ethereal style. From her flowing dresses and willowy hair to her mystical gestures, she seemed to walk in another world. Ty continued their ironic approach. They were all drawn to an intense experience. But they could step back from it all and plot a clearer path in the daylight. Too many of their friends were vampires. They could not countenance the daylight.

The three had loads of friends that filled out the group. Trish had a mean streak and an intensity of vision. Sherry was more glamorous. She knew that her powers resided in maintaining a constant show. Birt and Toni were more of that second generation. They didn't hang out with Bridge. But they recognized her. In a sense, she was their mentor.

The DJ tried to oblige the trio. He still played a lot of his usual fare. But he tried to spice it up. He started with some requests, and the embellished his play list. The floor was full of spins and elaborate poses. It was sculpture come alive. It gave me the excuse to be more elaborate in my moves.

- Is that guy on acid?
- I don't know.
- He seems pretty wild..
- Maybe, he's hiding something.
- We all are.
- You can't look back.

## THE VISITORS

We were practicing in an old warehouse space. Kevin had loaded his stuff and was ready to drive off.

- You were hanging out with Cathy.
- A scene girl.
- I think that she liked you.
- She told you about the tape.
- What?
- She left a tape. She wanted it to be an excuse for me to call her.
- You're not going to call her?
- You should see the piece of shit car that she has. I told her to park it a block away. We had sex in the basement. We did a little coke. I said why not.. She ought to know better. I could see him leading his parishioners.
- I'm into those aerobicized calves. Hard bodies. These club girls will put out. But they don't have it.

He grinned. What a dick!

- When I go down on a girl. I like my hands to grip firm muscles.

He stretched out to show his own fit body. He had to protect his suburban homestead.

- I like to venture into darkness. The Cult. All that shit. But you got to know it's temporary. I'm covering my ass.

He was!

- Gay. I try to understand that. I care for my body. Sometimes we're all fucked up and all. But I just can't see myself doing it that way. It's not like I want a traditional girl. I just want!

This was quite a reversal to my EA. I found myself trying to keep up with his beat. That boyish grin had a sleek appeal in the street light. He knew that he had them coming and going. Out ex-drummer even expressed a crush on Kevin.

Kevin wanted to ride this moment, to enhance himself with just enough of an edge to make his life entertaining. It was his boxing match. He worked his opponent on to the ropes. Backed away, and then just kept jabbing. He was in his game.

–You know Deb’s a real freak. She tries to come off as the holy religious girl. But once she feels that thing, there is no stopping her. I know that she’s been looking at me strange and all. I’d like to just bend her over and fuck her doggy style. But that would just give her a complex.

>>I’ve heard stories. She can’t stay with one guy because she always gets caught extra-curricular. She has loads of school work that has to get done. That girl is pumping it for the Lord!

>>I also heard that she loves to suck cock. She thinks that it’s all OK with her Savior. It’s like it’s Sunday every day of the week.

Kevin was keep himself busy with girls losing stuff at his place. He didn’t want to deal with a pro like Deb.

–I love her keyboard lines. But she’s going to play with us as long as she thinks that I’m going to do her.

*She looked at herself in her mirror.*

*–I’ll make you a deal.*

*She was still in her panties. There was still shame that filled her as she looked at her body.*

*–It’s not really good enough for you. It’s not good enough for me.*

*She turned around to look at her backside. She pulled off her panties and stroked herself.*

***<Who is witnessing this scene? I want more>***

*The more shame that she felt, the more licence that she would take. She never thought of herself as sexy. She was more sexual. It was part of her whole being. She never turned it on or off.*

*What had started her thinking this way?*

*–Deb!*

*–I’ll be right down.*

–Sex seems so much more attractive when there’s this element of danger. You know about the Coven.

–What?

–I’ve heard the tapes. They’ve got an audience of over a thousand kids. Word of mouth. They have sex orgies in graveyards. They sacrifice goats and shit.

–Really.

–I heard that they wanted to sacrifice this girl. She was into it.

–It sounds like shock. Some of them hang out on the hill over by Restless. They’re too young to get in. You’ve seen them.

I had seen loads of high school kids hanging out by a fire. There was even music going on. Every so often one would break from the group and rush over to Restless.

–They don’t get in much. But they love to hang out. Some of them even sell drugs.

–Really.

–Someone’s got to get the stuff for the adults.

Kevin found that really hilarious. He wouldn’t admit to buying from them.

–Their stuff is all shit. It’s impure and all cut.

–A lot of those girls are cute. I’ve seen a few at Metropolis. Nice bodies. Young things. But they’re really fucked up. These stories. Bad scenes. They’re all easy. Too easy. But they’d put a knife into you while you’re sleeping, and just steal all you music.

He was getting a kick spinning his tale. He felt powerful. I wanted to explore their denizens. But I didn’t feel comfortable. He was conducting a safe tour.

–I’d spend more time myself if I trusted it all. But the Coven are massive. They really believe in haunting. I know how we all want that thing. I was raised Catholic. I believe in all the spirits. The saints. Souls traveling. But these kids have been visited. Some hallucinate without drugs.

>> They steal skulls from graveyards. Take them home and await the evil spirits to show up.

–It sounds like a carnival act.

–It’s a trip. But I hear it’s real. I just hope things don’t get too fucked up.

–What?

–Killings and abductions.

## THE SCENE

*One good night, and I will be OK. The balance—just invert the balance—the good night for the bad—rewrite that script. He didn’t lose his temper with me. He didn’t get trashed he didn’t take liberties. It’s starting over.*

A story for every psychology.

*Run it over again. Make it come out different. Make me come out different. I don’t look messed up.*

**CAUSE**   **▷**

**EFFECT**   **◁**

Thea had felt the roles in reverse. Her effect became its own cause. She didn’t want to look back. But Toni had a different stories. She wanted to learn to spay with knives. To stab and not draw blood.

–Are you a doctor?

–I’m a goddess.

–You’ve got a great body. You could make money with that body.

–I’ve got a job. I hate it. But I make money. I pay my rent. I don’t owe anybody. I hate that.

–You look great. My night light.



She smiled. She liked the flattery.

–I’m not going to sleep with you. No touching. No sweet talk. We’ll just hang out and drink.

–That’s all.

She worked in a boutique. At first, she thought it was cool with all the dainty things in there. She was even in fashion shows. She had a great haircut. Straight black bob.

–I love the cut.

She glanced in the mirror.

–It is pretty cool

–Did you get trashed last night?

–Yeah.

–How come?

–It’s an anesthetic for the brain.

–What are you trying to forget?

–I don’t remember. I guess that it’s working.

–Do you like me a little?

–Cut the shit. I can find a girl to hang out with if you keep acting like a dick.

She knew where she was going. It had nothing to do with him. Nothing to do with anyone. She was going down where you couldn’t make it back up. And she wanted it that way. Wanted to accept the horror show. She had done her makeup with a convincing intensity. There was no other way. As if she knew that this was the night.

And tomorrow, she would be back for more until someone said to her *maybe*.

## **HOLDING BACK**

Restless never gave enough of the night to Toni. But already Kris had more than she could take. That was the paradox of this place. She had realized the hell that she entered. But the outside world seemed even worse. She felt a little sensitive that no guys had approached. When one finally came up to say something, she felt this wave of discomfort. She ordered another drink and moved away from the bar.

She watched the dancers. She was afraid to move on to the floor until she had an invitation. When she finally felt loose enough, she knocked into some people that she had been staring at. She was losing her sense of depth. She wasn’t drunk. But what was she doing here. A few times, guys would seem to engage her on the floor. She would spin away.

–I wouldn’t want to get caught dead here.

She wanted that push. Something to say that it was OK. And the upset that she felt only became more intense as she stayed.

–I’m not running away.

The washroom was crowded. She still found a place across from the mirror. She adjusted her hair. Her smile was full of self-satisfaction.

In the main room, she again felt lost in the crowd. This never happened anywhere else. Her tinted hair and tight dress would have been a knock out in Buckhead. She didn’t want to sell herself for anything less.

–What do you do?

She gave a boy in tight jeans a look of disdain. She was balancing on that edge, knowing that all someone had to do was to touch her, and she would melt on the floor. She was holding herself together.

–I need something stronger.

Even in the midst of seduction, she had always felt so in control. She wanted to blame the alcohol, but she was well below her limit. What limit? She could feel that there was no restraints here. What she had taken in here were fast slipping away. She needed to anchor herself.

–I’ve been watching you. You don’t seem to be agreeing with this place.

–I like it fine.

–I haven’t seen you here before.

–There’s loads of people here.

–None of them look so lost.

–Am I that obvious?

–No. I just wondered. My name’s Jay.

–Jay. You don’t seem like you belong here either. Sorry, my name is Kris.

–Kris. I love it here because you can lose yourself, and no one would notice the difference.

–It does get a little freaky.

–Let me get you a drink.

–Sure. Gin and tonic.

She could feel her time running out. But she felt the need to stay.

–That guy who’s getting you a drink. You don’t know him?

–I don’t know you.

Her comment was curt.

–Just some friendly advice.

–That you think that you’d be better for me.

–No, nothing of the kind. But if you’re going to play this game.

–You have to know the rules.

Jay came back with the drink. He saw her talking to another guy.

–Hey, I’m Jay.

He tried to deflect the situation.

–He was just leaving.

Kris wanted to absolve herself of the mess.

–It’s that guy again.

–What guy?

–Over there.

He pointed, but they were gone. Perhaps they were lost in the crowd.

–Some people need a rule book before they come here.

–You only learn by doing.

–And I’m really becoming undone by all this.

Kris shook her head a few times. What was she getting into. He had an air about him that reassured her. But maybe this place was just turning everything on its head. She'd been in this situation before. It was the flattery that she adored.

Her good sense had always protected her before. She could sense this chasm that threatened to swallow everyone around here. This was someone holding out a hand to save her from it. She had never faced anything like this before.

–Do you want to follow me home

She looked into his eyes. It was becoming too easy.

–I think that I hate this place.

She was doing all the talking now. He held her hand, and gazed back at her. No one could stop them.

–What the fuck?

Someone bumped into her at the bar. All of a sudden there was this jam up. A drink ended up getting spilled on her.

–I'm so sorry.

The clumsy patron seemed genuinely apologetic. He had just got caught in the crowd. Jay was visibly pissed. His eyes were on fire. But he restrained himself. He didn't want to crumb the play.

–I've got to go to the bathroom to wash this off.

She wanted another drink. She had been shaken from her wonderland. When she got out of the bathroom, she didn't go back to Jay at the bar. She took the long way around to the other bar. That night, she couldn't drive. One of the queens helped her get a cab.

–I'll see you all again some time.

She had traded fates in that moment. What was there about that place.

She barely made it into work the next day. All she could think about was Restless. She couldn't sit still.

Restless was already a more dangerous place than the Cube. But we lived on that line constantly. It still wasn't enough for us. It was just a bulwark that we used to press to the next level. Inside the brew was as varied as outside. But here everything was concentrated. This made the mix all the more potent. There was no place to refer the night. It presented itself as it was, as it wasn't. There was no daytime, no outside for rescue. It was all here. All twisted and misshapen. That was the night that we embraced.

So many players would still try to use their desire to spin out. Their entanglements gave them just enough momentum to inspire their nocturnal projects. No such luck! The amateurs were already lost in their pursuits.

Were the Initiated too jaded to interplay with the misfortune of Restless? Their drama played on a stage with its inevitable denouement. Here there was no macabre to push along the theater. It was all as it was. Sometimes without the literature, it seemed as if nothing was going on. These death rockers had their theology to save them. For every damnation, there was the force so powerful to welcome a resurrection. They hid from the dawn because they already carried its message in their personal darkness. There were no sun cycles at Restless.

Somewhere off distant shores burned a funeral pyre. Its reflection could be seen in Cathy's face as she sat on the bank of Restless.

–Do you see the visions that dance before us? We are ready to embrace our destiny.

–Don't you have math class tomorrow.

–I'm not going to school now. I've decided to give my life to the pursuit of truth.

I wasn't sure if I was suppose to laugh.

–It beats plotting out suburban fences.

–I'm not going to have anyone to figure out my cosmic equations.

She stared into space.

–I see them in the haze.

She was talking about the Kamikazes. Their era already made itself known. If only it could translate into matter. She had to be altered to see the procession.

–You don't hear the chorus.

–I'm still hearing the echoes from inside Restless.

She wouldn't let anything disturb her moment of reverence.

–We have finally made it home!

She had escaped the imprisonment of the mind. She wasn't going to let Kevin's antics get in her way. She was already beyond that.

Inside there were other puzzles

–You never even look at me.

There was a futility to her proposal.

–You only have to move a couple of feet and you'll be in my line of sight.

–You think that you're kind of savior. You just want what they all want. This meager perfection. What are you going to do any differently than anyone else? You ran away from one city because you couldn't get what you wanted. How are you going to change anything here?

Where did her tirade come from? I wanted to address her argument, but as she moved to established her position, I became distracted by another sight.

–I'm not Kuke.

–I know!

Her story would have fit in a book. This book.

–Do you know how long I worked on my hair? There's a story that goes along with this. I've got a binder with all kinds of pictures of haircuts. The scissors had to hit at the correct angle.

We were already beyond the idea of a novel. Instead, we were putting together a collection of fictional fashion advice. You would need this just to make sense of what put here in this place at this moment.

–I need a stimulant just to be myself. I don't want to come down. I want to go up.

–I want to help.

How long would it take to figure her out? Jay could do it in only a few minutes.

–You don't need the novel. You can make sense of it on your own.

I wanted to touch her face to see if the proportions fit the measurements of her book.

–Why are you looking at that girl?

My interruption from a few minutes earlier was again in my face.

–It’s who I’m looking at. That’s enough for me or you.

I turned away and looked again at my subject.

–This is art.

She concentrated on achieving that necessary reaction.

–How long would it take me to solve the equation?

–Maybe an hour or two.

–Where would we start?

–With my fear of sleep.

–What caused that?

–Phantoms in the night that wanted to take me down.

–Did you escape?

–I learned to love the night and sleep during the day.

–Does it show in my face?

–I used my make up to protect myself against the wearing side effects.

She was arriving at the delicate balance.

–There’s got to be more to this than hiding from ghosts.

–They all had their real accomplices, but I preferred not to think about that. From weird looks, to rude talk, to unwanted touching. That is how the ghosts make their way.

–And that is how you escape them?

–I learn words that I can use to reverse the touch. I learned to speak with spells. I learned the ways of supernatural.

–Did you learn more than that?

–I learned about my own transformation. Look at me, and you can see it in my face.

There was a look in her eyes that was more drawn than that of Cathy.

–Are you the new EA?

–What is EA?

–A new goddess, a prophetess.

–I am beyond that. I am an immunity.

–Will you play the part?

–I can’t. I’m not real.

Could the book accommodate the newly introduced character.

–This is just a fashion shoot.

–What is this?

–I have nothing to do with any of this.

But she must have had answers to help.

–What was going on when you sat down for that haircut.

–Look at what I say when I try to move.

She still couldn’t say enough with her gestures.

- Give me your hand.
- I can be one of them.
- One of what.
- The Initiated.
- What are the Initiated?
- Those who know already.

What was the night but this mix of FEAR and DESIRE! I need to give in to one of its creatures.

-This is not about touch. It is feeding. Knowing that we have these powers. This gives us the chance to feed.

- I'm not getting the details right.
- We sustain ourselves on drawing on your fear.

## CELEBRITIES GALORE

It was the final days of Galore. The impresario Norman had his dancers traipse across the bar.

-Don't you love these hick girls mixed with drag queens?

He liked to call himself AB-Norman.

-Like Abnormal.

Part of his vision was to turn RIP into a star.

-That's one step past celebrity.

Norm was still a product of the disco era. He loved the plush walls and the big beat.

-I'm one mean motherfucker!

He laughed as he said this. He pretended to be the pimp of Galore.

-Some guys come in here thinking that it's a strip joint. We end up getting them to take off their clothes. It's such a trip having them naked in front of everyone. I love it.

He knew that he could get anyone to do anything. He just needed the perfect audience. I had trouble taking Norm too seriously. It just didn't seem the thing to do. He had his own cabaret act. In it he sketched out his favorite personas and showed his understanding of the future. There was more to observe in the world of Ab-Norman.

## OLIVE

-She's got that perfect look.

-What about the body?

She wouldn't feel complete until she was inside him

She needed a ride. It had been a long night at Go Wild. She got a few drinks at Restless. Then she had to crash.

He had long hair and a biker look.

- You look pretty hot.
- Haven't see you around here.
- Haven't been around.
- Well, I've got to go.
- You need a ride.
- Just a ride.

She was staring at this tight jeans as he drove her in an old camaro.

- Do you I mind if I come in.
- They were making out in the hallway.
- You don't mind. I gave you a ride.

- I'm not going through this again.
- Just as long as he left before he started asking too many questions. No sentiment.

As they were thrusting together, she handed him a condom. He started to lift up her skirt. He slipped off her panties. He just pulled down his pants to his ankles.

- He struggled with the condom.
- I'm going to lose my erection

(▼) Just get it in. Be quick. I don't want to catch anything.

He weakly pumped away.

–Shit, you came inside me.

–No, I didn't

–(Δ) Now eat me out while I'm like this. I want something for all this effort.

–I'm going to be swallowing my own cum.

–(▽) Now you know what it's like. Just get me done.

His tongue lapped it up inside her. It mixed with his saliva, and he need to swallow. He couldn't spit it out with her like this. He just got into it.

–Now you got what you wanted, get the fuck out.

He didn't have a chance to do up his pants. She opened the door and just shoved him out with his stuff.

–It was great, bud.

She lost herself in a long shower. At least, she was able to dodge that one. She slept soundly.

Another guy, another night. She liked him better. They were lying in bed together. He thought that it was all too easy. He was a little surprised. He stared at her.

–What do want—a story?

–Not really.

–What are you, a reporter.

His mouth was wide open

–You ask a lot of questions.

He didn't say much else.

She was getting into his body. His legs. Grabbing his ass. Holding his cock in both hands until it got hard. She just held it. He let her. He didn't move. He didn't say a thing.

He liked her breasts, He held masses of flesh in his hand. She was fit, but he loved her ample body. He could feel that he was taking her all inside him, and vice versa.

–I love your body.

–What about me? Do you like me?

He smiled.

–Do you?

He could imagine holding her ass as he drove from behind. His focus. That's all that he could think about—his focus. Her. Her!

She wanted to get away from him. Nothing that she had given him was really part of her.

–You better go now. I have some errands in the morning.

She didn't want to cuddle. She just wanted to sleep.

–I can tell in a few minutes if a guy's going to give me what I want. Sometimes, I don't even want that. I just want him to do what he has to do and leave. Otherwise, he thinks that he's special. That's he's given me something valuable. It's like that at the club. That's why I like to get money. It makes it all clean.

## **THE BIGGER THE BETTER**

–I need to get what I want. Something that I can see. Like your place. It's great. A girl could get comfortable here.

–You can stay as long as you don't steal anything. Don't bring your friends her either.

She could live with this for a while. Today she felt a little sick. But she liked to see him naked. Liked it when he got aroused.

–You've heard about me.

–She looked down at him. She didn't want it to appear obvious.

–I can take care of you. Even girls that don't usually open up, I can give them what they need.

She wouldn't have to go over old news. She could spend all night talking about him.

## **SERENA**

–I feel terrible.

–You don't have to feel like this.

She chalked it up as a bad night. A bad night among too many bad nights.

–I'm feeling queasy.



Her head was spinning.

–I need to lie down.

She didn't go home. She had some more drinks.

–Are you sure that you don't need something else?

–I'm perfectly OK.

The next day she had a hair appointment. It wouldn't be enough to snip off a few curls. Now she wanted something radical. The scissors made their mark. There was nothing gentle about the cut. She could feel them slash across her past. Shampoo and hair dye. Her whole self swirled in these eddies. It wasn't simply gentle currents. She felt herself knock against a defiant surf.

–Everyone should do this.

She no longer had a story to live down. She caught the mirror by surprise. The contours of her face now seemed by intent. She was no longer adrift in a maze of contradictions. She ran her fingers through her hair and felt so free.

Indeed, she had been liberated.

The new face now graced Restless. She held her own against the dawn. Her former fatigue was a memory. She was engaged in a struggle to make the night submit.

–It's too early to leave.

Between what she hoped for and what felt, there was still this enormous chasm. But now she submerged herself into the gulf.

–No one else has the same confidence that you have.

She had heard that line before.

–I've been watching you all night.

She felt that gasp of introduction

–You have such an air of confidence.

She smiled. She was so grateful to be noticed

*You can't trust the feeling.*

–No one's talked to me all night

*Watch out!*

There was still too much that she wouldn't give to the night. Too much of herself was involved now more than ever.

–How do I know you're right?

She could feel herself let down her guard. All those feelings of inadequacy welled up. For the moment, she was in contact with something real. He could take her away from this. There would have been a clear purpose to her struggle. But where did he fit in the night. She had no reference point. He had only emerged from the shadows of Restless as anyone else might. But this might have been his appointed task. To always emerge this way. Or he may have been living upon this realization that this was his way in.

If he thought the way that he did, that meant that she was so much further ahead than

before. She was part of something. Even if she didn't know what it was, she couldn't give it up for him. She was light-headed. There was nothing that permitted her to resist her feelings. She had already given in. He was staring in her eyes. She was pretending that she wasn't go along with his suggestions. Where could this reality get a foothold. Where had this line of thought ever made sense.

Another drink would only make her more vulnerable. This was not the intent of her new look. The more that she got into him, the more that she would want to talk. She wanted to leave her past behind. She didn't want to frighten him away. But she opened up so that she could say something to him.

–Do you have anything stronger?

Something to steady the will. To resist the alcohol before she gave in deeper to her intoxication. She could sense the volumes that she was recording with her hesitation. This was her story while it still mattered. Even as she sung like a canary, she felt that she would be following a script. Right now, she could entirely be herself. She had been drinking, but she hit a moment of awareness.

–I need to use the girls' room.

As she looked in the mirror, she hardly recognized the face. This new person would not go back to him at the bar. Her old feelings would have left her in confusion. His touch would have been the only thing that resolved the confusion. But there was no resolve here.

She had given in to that gasp of recognition, but she no longer recognized herself. In this shock she undid all the work that he had done out there. Who the hell was he? She didn't recognize him. She didn't even know who she was. She wasn't going to surrender it all for this.

–I need a cigarette.

What was she saying. She didn't smoke. She wouldn't smoke now. She delayed her return. She literally held her ground. In that time, his own wonder would dissipate. He would realize that his complements had been paid for naught.

Saturday nights had possibilities. Too many. And he stabbed into the night. He wanted too early a resolution. Here, that meant none at all. No one could be pushed against the urgency of closing.

–It's time to go.

But it never was time to go. But he didn't feel it like that. He would keep messing up until he found a girl that was afraid of this place. One who lived on the immediacy of flattery. One who had been abandoned to the world of shifting desires.

–I want something real. Something I can touch. Something that I can own.

That was his girl even if he would get over her before dawn's early light.

–Do you want to make a bee line out of here?

–You are fast. I thought that I saw you talking to another girl.

–I was talking. But we're old friends. She got lost in the bathroom.

When she came out, he was already gone. She checked her hair in one of the mirrors. She still looked as good. Everyone had their eyes on her. She could remain in this reflection until she had to leave.

Syrena made her way up to the balcony where she could look down on the dancers. Kuke was in the midst of her crowd. For that brief second, she collected herself as she plotted her next move on the dance floor. To watch her was to be captivated. At first, it seemed that her attraction seemed no more assured than Syrena's. Kuke's certainty of gesture implied an intimacy with the music. Perhaps an intimacy with a whole corpus of music like this. But Syrena's look radiated all the same attitude.

Where did Kuke achieve her celebrity. Not simply an attraction in the moment. Something sustained. A sense of exorbitance accompanied her performance. How much more could she offer? Perhaps less because she would have to reserve herself to have energy for other performances. Syrena could be more involved. She wasn't facing the pressures of the nighttime.

Wasn't Syrena's comparison contradicting the investment that she had made in her new look. It wasn't just a look. It was a change in perspective. If she was open to this change, wasn't she on the same path as Kuke.

Syrena didn't want to see herself as an imitator.

—I can do this for another year. Then I'll have to stop.

She continued to watch Kuke. She couldn't become like her. She needed to be her just for a while.

—Who are you?

—I'm someone that needs to talk to you.

—I can't talk now. I have to keep watching.

—I can watch with you.

—Don't say anything.

—I have to figure out if you see what I see.

—I am watching her. Do you see her on the dance floor.

—I don't know who you mean. I am looking at you.

Syrena pointed out Kuke.

—She's obvious. Everyone is looking at her. Everyone wants to be her.

—You're taller than she is.

—Yeah. I guess I am.

—I like your hair.

—Thanks. Now look at her.

—I'm trying to look.

—There's more than looking. You have to see. To let what you see become part of you.

—I can only do what you tell me.

—You're being difficult.

How long would you have to stare until you would be convinced? Until you realize how little time she will offer you.

—Who are you?

—I'm someone who wants to know who you are.

—If you come here a lot, you should know who I am. If you don't come here, you have to

learn what we are about.

Kuke was being approached by her suitor of the night.

- Can we stop this while it is in progress?
- You’ll have to throw her a bone.
- Who’s the bone for the night?
  
- Syrena, could you run interference.
- It’s too late. You’ll have to wait your turn.
- What does this have to do with us.
- You like to watch her.
- I caught you watching her too.
- Could I step in her place.
- You already have.
- For how long.
- How long would it take me to make you forget Kuke?
- I don’t know. A week. Three months. Maybe a year.

As long as we are held by this audience, Kuke continues to hold our attention. To break from Restless, we could break from her hold. But Kuke kept us returning.

- It’s fun entertainment.
- More than that.
- A devotion.
- Then what is stopping you.
- A room full of admirers. An overeager suitor.
- Let him do what he has to do.
- It doesn’t seem too romantic.
- She’s not a machine.
- But she does act automatically. You can predict what she’s going to do.
- Drop her in the middle of the floor.
- You’re not a piece of lost currency yourself.
- Is that meant as a complement.
- I don’t know if complements are any longer in order.

We had been getting too abstract even for Restless. I couldn’t maintain my colloquy with Syrena. It was reminding me of the futility of my interest in Kuke. My attention was still wandering. A return of Thea. A visit by Dory. Or the delights of Kuke.

- Perhaps this is Kuke’s destiny.
- Tonight, she heads off with him and realizes that her life up to now has been a mistake.
- We could pretend that is the resolution.
- I must confess that I’m a bit of skeptic when it comes to your ideas on causality.

- What do you mean?
- Kuke is going to stay Kuke for a long while now.
- She is waiting for the right offer.
- How do you know?
- I’m a woman. I know what she is going through.
- She wants something else.
- Like what.
- She wants someone to offer her the world.
- She’ll get that offer.
- I always thought that she could create the vision for herself.
- So does she need Restless?
- What do you want?
- Tell me what you want. What does she want?
- The Cube. Everyone wished for her there. This is just a continuation.

On her view, Syrena could become Kuke on any given night. If someone walked in after Kuke had left with this mustard boy, she might have no idea that Kuke was important to this scene. She would accept Syrena as the easy replacement.

- Can I watch you dance.
- Do you want to hang out.
- I just want you to play Kuke for the night.
- How would I do that?
- By acting distant.
- I’m already acting pretty distant.
- How would I know the difference?
- You wouldn’t.
- So you will dance for me.
- I don’t like the music right now.

Syrena had been filled with the vibrance of Kuke’s dance. She had made her transaction. Now she was left alone with me and the remainder of Restless. She was afraid to stand still. Things were moving too slow now.

- Paradise would have a real form for her.
- This place feels like a dream

- We had this scene before. It would be necessary to repeat it.
- I could have Kuke as long as she was fascinated by this new life.
- Have her how.
- To operate the garbage disposal.
- Does it work here?
- Everything works.
- What if I want to come back.
- It’s your house now.

Kuke continued to mesmerize Syrena. She looked down as she made another turn. She made the beat in a way that her imitators just dragged along in time.

– I don't need you anymore.

–What?

–I did what I had to do. I accepted everything that you offered me. It wasn't enough.

–I never can get what I want.

She accepted the night. It held out ample promise for her satisfaction. Sure, she sometimes found herself digging out of hole. But there was always alcohol to help. There was reason enough to welcome the night. If she wasn't going to get what she was after, she could always rush on home

Friends had told her about Restless. It increased her odds. If she couldn't score any excitement at her local bar, she always had a second chance before she packed it in. It was hard to resist complements. She knew that she had a lucky appeal. And she tested it each time that she went out. But she didn't want to sell her soul to the devil. She held on to her job. She worked in a real estate office.

Why hadn't she settled down? The pace seemed to be jostling her around. But sitting at the bar, she had a sense of serenity. She sipped her drink slowly. There was always another waiting. And she could check out before she became too tipsy. Besides her tolerance was pretty good.

Restless was a strange proposition for her. She welcomed it! Where she might get hit on a bunch at another bar, she could be left alone the whole night. That turned some of her friends off. They wanted to night to come to them. They could take what they were offered. Restless force you to be a little cagey. She was willing to play the strategy.

She didn't understand the embrace of the night. She wasn't one to dwell on her troubles. There was a daylight to go back to. She simply enjoyed all the spectacle around her. It made it OK for her occasionally to indulge too much. At least, she wasn't going to slip all the way down.

Restless was a great bull shit detector.

–One night I'm telling everyone that we're going out. I'm meeting all your friends. And the one night that I stay in, I catch you here with some girl.

–We were just dancing.

–You were grinding your body against hers. You kissed her. Yo went home with her.

–That doesn't mean that we can't keep going out.

–Actually, it does. We're finished.

–What do you mean? You said that you were staying in that night. I just wanted to have a little fun.

–I did stay in. But I woke up in the middle of the night. I was a little uneasy. I headed down here for a drink. Of course, it was still open.

It was better to close the book while she had the chance. She didn't come here to mull over past defeats. Each time out, she could feel the spark. Even if she went home alone, it wasn't because she lacked charm.

She wished the night would be more welcoming. She would have to give up to much of herself. When she did get a little tipsy, her willingness to believe became greater. All her

graciousness came out. Guys got off on that. Once they accepted the same rewards, she just let go. She could be ravenous. She lived in her body. She adorned herself with seductive intimate wear. When she gave of herself, she really gave.

Her sexuality was athletic. She made no secret about that. She wanted more than sport. But when she yielded her will, there was no pretense. No hesitation. She saved her show for just such moments.

Vera had tried to live the night as a game. She thought her friends were too obsessed with the imagery. No ghost was going to satisfy her. No ghost was going to give her what she wanted. The devil make care. She was out on her own.

She shared a passion with her friends. They were all part of the Initiated. She gave all that energy to her boy. She had settled to a meager satisfaction. But it was a portal. She sometimes felt that she was out of her body, watching herself while she had sex. At other times, this monster seemed to get hold of her.

–I’m not a machine; I’m a person.

–You’re a machine with special powers. That’s why I can never leave you.

But he found a sexual dynamo that brought out all the same animals in him, and more. She couldn’t compete. The breakup was nasty. She found herself facing demons that she didn’t even know were there. Long nights by herself. Not sleeping. Voices filling her night. She wanted to end it all. She could feel the embrace of the blade before she lost herself to the nether world.

Her friends pulled her out of it. She still longed for the same passion. Her body was still on fire. One touch and she would melt. She felt that she would only be bait in the club scene. Every guy seemed to promise that same excitement. She wanted more than enjoyment. She crossed over into darkness. She became a better conjurer than her pals. Her body became totally attuned to the nocturnal rhythms. She would turn her back on abusive guys.

–I’ m going to get something better. Something more uplifting than this shit.

She haunted Restless. Heads turned as she walked by. She had just emerged from a nightmare into the light.

–Did you see my band.

Glen was out without Nicole. He was already trashed. And his tongue wagged freely.

–Come on up to the dressing room

This wasn’t Vera’s style. But she had always admired what Nicole and Glen had. It seemed to have all the appeal that she had only glimpsed with her guy.

–I like Nicole.

–I do too. But she’s not out tonight. You have to take what you can get.

–Really.

She was a bit cynical. Already he was kissing her neck. She stopped his hand as it started to move along her stomach.

–Why not!

Vera felt a little cheap having sex in the dressing room. The rest of the band had wanted to come in. But they knew what Glen was doing. They thought that his bravado would

eventually line them up with success.

–If you can't sleep your way to the top, why were you born with a dick.

They all laughed. They would all be condemned for their humor.

–I want to see you again.

–Why sure!

The next time wouldn't be in a dressing room.

Glen wasn't what she had wanted from sex. She lost herself in the moment. It again made her feel powerful. But he was all about his own pleasure. She was better at spotting that.

For the Initiated, the night held that mystery. It gave them what they all needed from the material world. Most believed in the crossing over into the supernatural realm. It was not just a hope. It was a reality. How else could they deal with these massive emotions which captivated them. They had first been pushed into these regions of the forbidden. Often their bodies spoke of a shame. In passion, all their confusions seemed to dissipate. They had a way to talk where previously the worlds rendered them mute.

After losing themselves in frenzy, they would only feel worse. It wasn't as if they were making this happen. It was part of their destiny. They could feel these forces overcome them. The night had this independence that they needed to tame. In this realm, true monster could vent their hatreds. The same intensity given to sex could be unleashed in a temper tantrum. Pain might seem appealing in the abstract. It balanced out the traumas of youth.

–I don't have a story.

But the reality of abuse was unpleasant. It made a person hard. Even at these moments, the girl would still call upon her supernatural alliances to bail her out of horrible predicaments.

The sorceress would emerge from the times of stress. She was no longer helpless before the dominant. She would even use sex games to subdue potential opponents.

–You like this. Forty lashes for you.

Was she representing pain, or did she need to deliver her lesson?

Once liberated, her sexuality was part of a new spirituality. The physical embrace would have a prominent place in her new divinity. No longer would she feel shame in her body. This self-love manifested itself as a vanquishing by the darkness.

As she became more stable, she found that she was making deals with the daytime. The night crept into the day.

There was another strategy attempted by the more daring. They would find better expression at Restless. For these souls, their search had pushed them deeper into the hollow. They were not ready for a therapy. They sought a permanent midnight. How could you prevent the night from running away. As it became later and later, they could feel all the energies drawn from their body. Artificial means had kept them propped up all night long. But the shores of the daylight were fast encroaching. A more potent dose needed to work the transition to the next night. They would never see the daylight.



With the complete assimilation by the night, the Uninitiated, these forsaken, saw their financial resources dwindle. They would have to make their peace elsewhere if they wanted to keep this going.

A theft could prop you up for one night. But exposure would risk banishment. The body was always a form of currencies. Young bodies had an appeal that would last a few weeks.

–When are you going to get rid of that stray who crashed at your place?

–His days are numbered!

Young males found their way more profitable at Restless. The flesh yielded without any accompanying emotional residue.

–I've got to make my way out.

–Go ahead. You know where we are.

–You've got a great body.

He got up naked from the bed. His lover for the night touched his backside. Living on the street meant that he sometimes didn't eat. But he tried to keep his youth.

–Thanks.

–I wish that I could let you stay. But my partner would get jealous. He lets me do what I want while he's away. But when he comes back, it's his law. I'm almost a kept man here.

He headed for another day on his own. He'd taken a pack of cigarettes from the apartment. He'd also had breakfast. That ought to tide him over for a while. He just needed to last until the night. Maybe he could find a connection that would be permanent. His lifestyle didn't make him stable enough to work. He had to use his body while he still could.

Other youths often seemed to be his rivals. He assured himself that he had something that they couldn't offer.

No shame would inhibit him. He wouldn't shrink before any sexual challenge. When he had the chance he'd work out. But this would only strengthen his already developed physique.

He sat in a doughnut shop trying to collect himself for the coming day. He smoke a cigarette and slowly sipped his coffee. He hated to smoke. But he needed something to help kick the day into gear. He watched the passers-by as they all headed off to work. They all had this mix of purpose and desperation

He tried to plot a strategy for the rest of the day. When he was lucky he could find a place to stay for a week or a month. He'd make the place his own. He'd cook. Play music during the day. He'd have a chance to find himself. To get a little comfort. This was not one of those times. At least. It was warm out.

His youth was his commodity. And he could keep selling it. It made his lovers think that they weren't getting old. They would challenge him. They would try to bring him down. But he could always come back for more. His endurance could have been the stuff of legends. Instead, he wasted himself on meaningless adventures.

He told himself that there was more to his quest than cheap sex. He felt like a warrior. He was in a battle. He helped his lovers with demons that seemed to overcome them. They were immersed in petty troubles. Rent, bad debts, love affairs gone wrong. He had no such burdens. He could have thought about where things messed up. He didn't. It pissed him off. But he blocked it out.

It gave him headaches. He needed to avoid feeling that way. As long as he maintained a positive attitude, he'd avoid the weight of the world. But just for tonight, he needed to make something happen. He needed somewhere to crash.

Restless was so easy for him. He blended in well. His hard look made him appear to have a story. He let guys fill in for what they needed.. He was experienced. He was poetic. So he could oblige. He had dreams. He wished that he could write better. His story was fascinating.

But to write meant to dwell on his past. He was already beyond that. He was moving ahead.

He took another sip of coffee. He only had a few cigarettes left. It was only midday, and it would be a long night.

One of Billy's friends picked him up. The sex was ferocious. It bordered on the aggressive. He could tell that the lover was angry.

–You know what they call you.

–No.

–Johnny the Hustler. I can tell everyone that I fucked Johnny the Hustler. Or more accurately, Johnny fucked me.

Johnny was walking around. The lover was in bed.

–Johnny, what do you want to do with your life. You can't do this for ever. You must have dreams.

–Yeah. I've thought about being a model.

–You ever have anyone taken pictures of you.

–Just some amateur stuff.

–You're drifting. You need plan.

–I sort of have a plan.

–Doing what?

–Just things. I've always been lucky.

–That's not enough.

–You don't seem to be all that together.

–I worked as a bartender. I put myself through beauty school. I've got a job at a beauty salon.

–You don't seem all that happy.

–I get by. I make my own way.

He could feel Johnny insulting the whole Imperial Set. He didn't like someone thumbing his nose at his gang.

–I've seen street toughs like you. You all have answers. But you're all lost. Questions after questions.

He was still as aggressive as he had been during the sex. Johnny decided not to push back. He just let the lover fall over himself as he charged against a lack of resistance.

–I'd love to have you stay another night. But I don't know what you'd get into.

–That's OK. I can make it on my own.

He didn't want to just be part of somebody's plans. He wanted it all clear for himself.

This was a place of complications. Perhaps he should have gone home with someone else. He hated the fact that he was getting a reputation at Restless.

–You can't count your chickens before they hatch.

Or was it before you pluck. He felt skinned alive. But he welcomed all the pain. It made him seem alive. As he closed the door, he felt like the jailer. Restless was just a wall against the street.

He had taken enough money to last a couple of days. This wasn't a trick, but he needed it to make it through. His new friend wouldn't miss it. It was his gift.

The morning felt bleak. Again he was on his own. He couldn't always find someone new. Tonight would be a Friday. He needed to work the weekends to his advantage. There would be loads of men trying to cover their tracks. Johnny knew the perfect remedies for rewriting history. He was already turning the flamboyance of Restless on it head. The night would have its curse. And he would share it with as many who didn't fear its fruits. He walked in the park and hoped to relieve his boredom.

## **AFFORD TO PAY**

He knew that he never wanted to end up on the streets. He had seen it all close up. Seen his desire take him so close to the night that he almost crashed permanently. So he stayed in a world of safety. A world of economic security. But he loved the weekly temptations. At 4:30 AM on a Saturday night, there was always a fatal pause. Just enough time to bring him back from the dead. The emergency medical team knew what was needed to jolt him back to life. He slowly had his dosage increased until he returned to the land of the living

Each week it took more and more to bring him back. That inimitable smile always accompanied his resuscitation.

–You really didn't need medical help.

–That's just a joke.

–A scary joke at that.

He found that his success only made him more attractive in this setting. That had been the dominant characteristic of the Imperial Set. The night was only the crowning achievement of the day. If many in the Set found themselves pulling back with the transition, he used Restless to establish his independence for the royalty. He never was taken in by their fashionable demeanor. He didn't even frequent their art. He combined a view of comfort and adventure that put him at the forefront of the club scene. But his attitude could have been transplanted to any late night club. He had forgotten about all the mystical narrative that made the Imperials so distinctive. It made him better able to appeal to any naturals who wandered in off the street. They could all temporarily devote themselves to the night.

–I can't lose my day gig.

And his day gig let him be ruthless in the darkness. There was no insight that he would gain that would really threaten his concentration at work. He had all that down to a science. His off time just gave him enough to acquire those delights that he felt he deserve.

He wouldn't let any social commitments get in the way of his rewards. He straddled this middle zone where he could be completely casual about his social position. He took this

perspective from all the denizens of the night. At the same time, he could pick and choose his associations. These he did to his advantage. He could always retreat to a luxurious apartment. He thought that his life was set.

Could any drama disturb his pose? He was able to buy the latest music. Even imports. He thought that he was a better source than the DJ's. In clothes he favored more reserved European designers. He had kept up with all the flash of the Cube. Now he devoted himself to a different image.

He disputed what he saw as silly play-acting on the part of the scene. There was no metaphysics, just a hearty belief in pleasure. He dispensed with the transcendence and carried on the hedonism. He even dispensed with the nod towards sensual expression. His sexual licence was automatic. He needed more of a push towards intoxication. Even with his achievements, he still needed anesthetic. It wasn't ambition. His world still demanded authority. He was gaining that prerequisite. So he needed occasionally to break down before he got eaten up by the race.

He hung on by virtue of his hard-partying. He firmly staked his claim to his new lifestyle. He was an inestimable example to the crowd at Restless. If they thought of him as an amateur, they faced an imperative for more intense stimulation. The rise of Infra, the arrival of the Initiated and the Kamikazes were all signs that the Imperial Set welcomed the extreme.

## THE NIGHT

The sunshine pored down upon the room. No one could sleep at this moment even after a night of crushing partying. The night could tear you up in this obvious way. A restless sleep left you helpless at work. You watched the moments tick down in the dreaded sentence before eventual release.

A memory of childhood, staying up past your bedtime when the ghosts became too appealing to close your eyes. You were welcomed into the haunting night when no one closed up shop for eternal rest. No one told you that it was time for bed. And a fated insomnia cracked the moments of silence. In these hollow echoes, the night began to speak. Not having slept for days, the awaited voices answer back. You start to dream while awake. In your lucidity, you can control your dreams. Horror mixes with ecstasy.

*What have I done?* And you learned to destroy the world just as you created it. You ran and ran in an open clearing just trying to escape this new legacy.

You were a visionary. In the dead of night, a fire illuminated your cherished images. You were orphaned to the darkness. You could not make your way back home. Abandoned to the emerging ghosts, you could only babble on. You needed a philosophy. Otherwise, you would be worn down by ordeal of toeing the borderline. You slipped naturally into this new personality. Inside matched outside. In makeup or dress you exuded a new-found intensity. You weren't bitter. But you had hardened. The daylight only reflected your shell. Your image was a signal to all the like-minded that you had undergone a metamorphosis. Even the body transformed with the new technology. You were always uneasy in the daylight. With dusk, you could settle down. You weren't vampiric. You didn't feed. You announced the conversion.

Even if you couldn't work miracles, you accepted the startling events that passed around you. You wondered if you would be able to absorb all this upheaval. You no longer could be a

drone. But it was hard to quiet the turmoil. You needed to survive undercover.

Others mistook your change for a more appealing alternative. They tried to tag along not realizing the arduous expectations of the new vocation. To set themselves upright, they would try to drain your attraction for their own gains. You were already prepared for such a game. That was why you had dabbled in the demonic. The night had its own forms of vengeance. You let it run its course.

You wouldn't entertain any doubt about your ascendent state. You looked the part. Immaculately. You measured others against this model. Too often they couldn't achieve that perfection. Your hand had been steady in approximating the lines. You were a living canvas. Little did anyone know the depths that were involved in maintaining these surfaces. Diet. The illusions of health. Attentiveness to image. The right look. Flexible and consistent.

Thea had achieved her divinity on such a basis. But the Imperial Set were only a facsimile of the struggle with the night. The daytime pulled them all back. Even Kuke felt the pressure of being a standard for Restless. At the Cube, the image adorned the self. The self was the mannequin. At Restless, the two melded into one. There was the dangerous proposition that there was nothing but image. This established the need for a deeper vision. But the delicate souls couldn't delve into the precipitous depths. They needed some artificial supports. And Restless offered the chance for everyone to fall together on cue. The hard landing always seemed cushioned by the last rider. They all looked the part as they went down. They didn't want to mess with their new do.

## **KAMIKAZE NIGHT**

It was a night that clearly spoke to the changing of the guard. Terry, Jack and Blaise showed up with a pile of records.

–He's going to play Tones on Tale. And Christian Death.

It was more than an occasional track that had previously graced the play list. The night reflected the real shift in taste. Even though the DJ was reluctant, he gave in.

Jack was masterful on the floor. His spins propelled him into space. He caught himself as he landed, and then he again took flight. This was anti-balletic. The affirmation of the dancer worked against any attraction to elegance. The movement had a delicate quality. But it was also chaotic. The dancer controlled his contradiction, and threw himself into this gulf.

Terry was more aggressive. The Kamikazes could not be touched. Blaise seemed to sweep the rest of the floor so that they all asserted their unity. It could not be broken by their rivals. I worked to imitate their enthusiasm. I twirled and vaulted, I dove and recovered.

We were all magnificent. There was nothing in our exuberance that referenced any of the previous lights. There was no Thea, no Kuke. They pretended that they were offering tribute to their pagan idols. But the dances of this night probed the very culture of belief. The undulating figures and twisted forms made the previous patrons seem helpless. We did not look back to any trauma. We did not create a hiding space. We were open in our gestures. If there was always a chaotic element at Restless, we extended that spiral. We engaged ourselves with the storm.

In other hands, this would have been an exploration of the potency of the nether world. Our movement was physical. Our salvation was palpable. We broke open the night.

The Imperial Set still held to their bank. They wanted a world enveloped in its security. They could maintain their hold for only so long. The appeals of the dance were not part of their mastery. Their representatives would only fall short before this new mastery.

Even with the 24 hour license, Restless had primarily sanctioned the Imperial Set on the weekends. The Kamikazes were a total defiance of the Titan's order. It broke the hold of the daytime. How would they be able to survive such a radical posture that went against all ideas of work. Infra had already sketched some of the parameters. But he was still subservient to the Imperial Set. They had sponsors within the Set. But they owed nothing to the group and its supposed nobility. They were true iconoclasts.

Everyone was completely independent. All challenged the personal gravities that held the self in place. But the harmony was incredible. You could marvel from the outside. Or you could enter the interplay. Everything else was superfluous. It built to climaxes. But it knew about these false resolutions. So the currents became more and more involved. The dancer who nonchalantly drifted inside would drown.

There was a purity to this night. There was no distraction in the pose. There was a constantly evolving dynamic. It did not seek anything else. It did not promise anything else. It should have been self-sufficient on its own. It was a twisted deception of Restless that did not allow reward for this ultimate level. The players succeeded without reservation. But Restless lived on indulging failure. The drinks flowed as long as the promise eluded the faithful. For those in the know, this was the end of a tired theology.

## **THERESA**

They drifted from smaller towns in Alabama or Florida. They didn't have the skills to get the better jobs held by the Imperial Set. Sometimes they would work in gas stations or liquor stores. They already live on the edge of the night. So they wanted something more frightening to captivated their pleasures. They had naturally gravitated to Restless. They were hardly welcomed with open arms. The Buford Boys had none of the grace of the Imperial Set. And their numbers threatened to inverse the balances of population. So they were doubly resented. Theresa made her way with these orphans. They couldn't go back to their former communities, but they felt rejected in the city.

Her flowing curls gave her an angelic disposition. If she had been Kuke, this might have been a strength. As it was, it left her exposed to the taunts from the shadows.

–You look all the angel.

She smiled.

–I feel all the devil.

–I've got something to help balance that out.

The phantoms offered her the touch that gave her a suitable entry to the cabal. It wouldn't require any further skills.

–Are you telling me to just sit pretty?

–That would work.

–I feel more like a sitting duck.

Was she risking cat calls from her rivals.

–I didn't think that anyone cared.

In a world dominated by Kuke, she was a quick snack. They did everything that they could to quickly devour her charms.

–You're not the wicked wolf.

–No, but I do have a big tongue to taste you.

Her edges were all soft. Perhaps, she needed more of an urban edge to face the creatures in these woods.

–I'm not naive.

She had only been here a short while, and she could already feel her heart tugging on her.

–I guess I have a weakness for boys.

–Like sweets.

–I can still resist the sweets.

–You're as sweet as sugar yourself.

If she already would have entranced her small town, the city night only made her seem more beguiling. But she had a weakness for the mirror. In a world where images were hewn in marble, she wondered if she could measure up to such luminaries.

–I just don't want anyone laughing at me.

Perhaps her sentiments were echoed in all these children from Buford Highway. They lacked the style of midtown. And everything that they did to transform themselves only made the models more distant to their approach. Only Ruby didn't even bother. She just played herself in the this drama. She gave advice to the other high flyers.

The Buford Boys wanted to be the Kamikazes. They knew that the Imperial Set were vulnerable. They felt they could hit them at the heart. But their futility would only expose the very weaknesses that they hoped to cast off.

–You are so beautiful

–You just want to get something from me.

–You don't want something from me.

–Something that you can't give.

–My heart. I can give you my heart.

–I want a way out of here. Can you give that to me?

–We could live together. I've got room at my place.

–I have a place to stay.

*Until you get good repeating the same thing over and over again.*

–How do I make it last?

–You have to believe in yourself.

–I think that I want more than that.

She tried to concentrate. Tried giving herself to the night.

- I'm not doing too well.
- We could go make some fun back at my place.
- You are sure of yourself.
- If I don't say something, every other guy is going to take his chance.
- A lot of these guys don't even like women.
- What did I say? You've got someone cool to hang out with.

Defense mechanisms.

- I need them to keep me whole.

Something that had nothing to do with Restless. Her previous life. (Was that possible?)

He was staring at her. He tried to imagine them together.

- Are you looking at my body?

He smiled. She did little to contradict his feeling. He took her inaction as acquiescence.

He really believed that this was all of us doing. He didn't want to know any different.

- You're not messing with my mind?

He had all the questions. But he couldn't articulate any of them. He reached for her hand. She gave it to him freely. He was giving in to his belief. She wasn't clever enough to stop him in mid-course.

- You are exceptional.

- I can't do this.

Her shame was all so well-rehearsed. She had little else. He thought that she was reading from another script. Something more poetic. All she could offer were other experiences just as ill-fated as this one. She didn't mean for it to keep going this way. But what really could she share. What did anyone have here. Coming after Kuke and Thea, it was just an imitation.

- I wouldn't want something to say that about me.

She was not a clumsy dancer. Her moves suggested shyness. It made her all the more appealing. It gave the guy a chance to fill in for what they couldn't see. And her appeal made the process endless.

- I want you to kiss me.

She cooed.

- How unreal.

- It wasn't really like this.

- I'm going to fuck up my life for you.

- It wasn't really like this.

## PERFORMANCE

- I summon up the past.

They had all got together for a seance. They were going to call out the ghosts that inhabited this old house.

- I've heard noises.

- Really. What's stopping you?



–From what?

–Communicating with the other world.

–That’s why we’re all here.

–You need an excuse to communicate with the ghosts in your own house.

–No. I just felt afraid to try this on my own.

–It’s not like they can really hurt you. They don’t survive in the material world. They can only make suggestions to try to affect our behavior.

–To draw us over to the other side.

–I’ve heard them move things in my house.

–You can just tell them to stop.

–Sometimes they don’t obey orders.

–You have to learn how to talk them.

–I’m trying to do all that I can.

–You need more skills.

Tara thought her skills with the supernatural could overwhelm any negative effects that might befall her in the struggle with these spirits.

–We have to stop them now before they try to make it back to our place.

–If we’re going to make it happen, we have to find a ghost to call on.

–Does anyone know a dead person that we can bring back.

–No one from the scene has died yet.

–Then we need a volunteer to take us to the land of the dead.

–Someone who can pretend to be dead.

–Who’s going to volunteer?

–Tara knows all about the undead. She’s the best subject.

–Tara, can you play dead?

She could feel the chills as she heard the group nominate her. If she was needed to play the dead girl, that would be fine for her. The ghosts were already coming over her.

–I don’t like this game.

But Tara was too far gone. They needed her that way.

–What happened in this house?

–Bad things.

–A murder.

–Torture.

–You can’t leave without facing the effects.

Tara felt the effects of depression. She was having fun. They were all drinking. But she felt like a mess. She tried to hold back the melancholy. There was no holding back. It was as if she was giving in to tears.

–Ghosts of our past come to us. Open yourself to us. We are ready. Tara, can you hear us. Tara, Tara, Tara!

The shivers became greater. She was reminded of a destructive streak. And she thought that she had escaped this side of herself.

–Tara, do you need us to stop.

–We haven’t gone far enough.

In the process, she was becoming the ghost.

–You don't want to fall and hurt yourself.

Doors that opened to emptiness. She would cross this threshold only to fall.

–Certain death.

–Tara, hold back.

–I'm scared.

–It's just a game.

If she was going to go down, someone was going to push her.

–This is part of the search.

She was slipping further and further into the swirling fear.

–I can't stop myself.

–I can't stop you.

–Who's going to push?

The game was taking on a darker side. Someone wanted to hurt her. The aggressive urge made its way around the group.

–If we're going to communicate with the dead, you really need to be dead.

–We're just playing.

But the suggestion had already made the rounds. It was hypnotic.

–If the ghosts are really effective, they need to take over the self.

–What are you saying?

–If there are no homicidal urges, then we really don't know the ghosts.

–What really happened?

–What do you mean?

–He strangled her.

–Like this.

He put his hands around her neck.

–How badly do you want this?

–Enough to die.

She hated the game was going this far. But Tara knew that there was a sexual rush to all of this. She had been seduced by the night.

The crew continued to call out their ghosts. They felt more and more absorbed by their desires. This gave them all an intimacy that they could never experience on the physical realm. It left no room for doubt.

–Why are we like this? What do you want?

–I want eternity.

–You can only get it, if you take the risk.

–What's the risk?

–The risk is your life. Are you willing to make the sacrifice?

–Nothing is worth it.

–You don't want the power. You have to touch it. You have to feel it. It will be great for you. This house will be your prison.

–What do I have to do?

–You have to become him.

–I already have become him.

–You are the only one.

–Kiss me.

–Never, never.

–I'm doing this just for you.

Nature seemed to cooperate. It provided a convenient backdrop for these feelings. The night crackled.

–Don't let them do this to you.

–The night is feeling it. It is all shaking among us.

–Is this a miracle?

–It's fueling our hate.

–We have to stop this now. We've opened a force that we can't control.

–I hate myself for becoming what I am.

–Squeeze harder.

The chaos wouldn't allow him to separate himself from everything that was dragging him into this hell.

–I didn't mean to let it happen.

–You're still giving in.

–You can stop if you want to stop.

–How do I do that?

–You have to stop.

–This is the only thing that makes me feel alive.

–The more that I push, the more that I accept the experience. I am giving in.

–It's always the same.

–What?

–You are being abandoned by everything that means anything for you. You have to do something. You have to act. You can make it happen.

–Squeeze harder.

It became harder and harder to separate this vision from the outer world that turned around them.

–What am I doing?

–Surrender!

–What?

–Surrender.

–I'm the only one that can help.

–You can't give in.

They all were ready to go home after a long night of partying.

–Where's Tara?

–I haven't seen her since the seance.

–I passed out.

–No one's seen her.

They started to explore the house.

–That door was locked..  
 –What door?  
 –It leads nowhere. It’s a sheer drop.  
 –The door’s open. See it is.  
 He opened the door to show the empty space ahead.  
 –What did we do wrong?  
 He looked down to see a fallen Tara.  
 –Get down there.  
 –What happened.  
 –What the fuck!  
 They tried to resuscitate a fallen Tara.  
 –Is she hurt?  
 –She’s dead.  
 –What?  
 –She’s dead. She’s fucking dead. It wasn’t a game.

–I summon up the past.

Our song was being played on the radio. People were complementing us at Restless. It was time to play Spring Street Haunt. A lot of the death rockers hung out there. They got there full with the variety of shows.

–There aren’t many people here.  
 –I told a bunch of people at Restless. It’s just not our moment.  
 –It could be some day.  
 –We have to make it happen tonight.  
 This was a far cry from Harvest Arts.  
 –Im sure there are ghosts here.  
 –I’ve heard that there’s a demon or two here.  
 –One of the door guys workers said that he hears voices after everyone is run out of this place.  
 –He’s taken too much acid.  
 –Iggy Pop once played here four nights in a row. His set lists are written on the wall.  
 –Imagine that. Four nights in a row.  
 –That is a lot.

## MARK

Mark found Kuke charming. But he was never taken in by the Kuke phenomenon. He was still taken in by the Count’s sense of glamor. Or he would dwell on the charms of some new boy who graced the club. I downplayed my fascination for him. But I could hardly overlook the characteristic style that she brought Restless. I let Mark continue on with his delusion. He needed to ignore the dominant wave so that he could advance his own distinctions. He continued to admire men with long hair in skirts. Kuke hardly gratified even a substitute fantasy. He regaled in his sideline view. Even after coming here as much as he did, he still remained in the

same vantage point. He tried to interact with others. But he couldn't peel beneath their surface. He couldn't accommodate their quick exchanges. He was afraid of his sexuality. He wanted a kiss to mean something. But he was so lost in the abstraction that he was afraid to be touched.

–Sometimes going to the toilet seems traumatic. It just seems to easy in there.

If he thought about it that way, part of him was drawn to an easy surrender. He tried to hold on to a fragile identity so that he could tempt himself with a quick conquest.

–I'm the only one that is going to lose in this.

He didn't see that the style or music was passing him by.

–If a guy looks at you, you're afraid to smile.

He admitted to having had sex with a kid at school. Or he would disappear for a couple of days. I assumed that he was seeing someone. He still returned with that same drawn look.

–That boy over there is cute.

Did he want me to share his sentiment. Again I felt superfluous. He needed me as a witness to his own desire. This was how he acted things out. He would never say anything unless he was forced to.

All the guys that he talked with simply served to integrate him into a scene which he couldn't relate to. When he expressed his deep crushes, he was paralyzed before the physical enormity.

–I like to touch and hold.

He needed something to push him over the line.

–How did your show go? Sorry I didn't make it.

–It was a terrible night. It was raining. Not a lot of people made it out. I thought that some of the crowd might be there.

–Did you play well?

–We had fun.

I knew that he wasn't going to make it. It wasn't his thing. He wanted his culture pre-processed, not live.

Mark had nowhere to go with his feelings. Restless was already moving into a new realm. Even the Imperial Set could rev up their engines a notch. Mark was still lost in the pose of the Cube. Kuke's dance moves were too kinetic for his vision.

I watched him retreat into his own story. I wanted to pull him out of it. But he so often ignored me.

–Do you want to go over to Lucky's.

He was watching a boy.

–I'm having too much fun on my here.

## **EA RETURNS**

Her probing eyes said something. She was taking it all in. The world was being transformed into her creation. To watch was her art. And I wanted to see what she was seeing. Her serious demeanor delimited her a sense of mission. The slow gestures sketched out each detail. She was going beyond human form.

The body had given her a frame. The world shaped itself around this frame. It was like a canvas with a piece cut out. This represented her watching. But to feel the same thing was to invert this picture. To extend the layers of point of view and to explode the initial reference point. This was her education. It made itself known as a series of gestures. An observer could follow along the sequence to acquire the same insight as her. As developed, the insight need to be elaborated in order. It needed its performance.

A temptation threatened the promise. She wanted to experience the realization as an integral whole. It would come to her in a flash. The flash would be *more potent* than the initial apprehension. It would affect the body. She would be flipped around by its wonder. If she could feel it this way, she could share it in a similar fashion. She opened herself to the sharing. In a manner, she lived only for this event.

Could her canvas bear this representation. Or was the feeling chaotic. It resisted the limits of her canvas. Did it offer its own model. The model would not be contained by the art. How had the art threatened its own process? How had she stumbled on a paralysis?

–If I see this thing that strikes my fancy, I’ll be helpless.

She didn’t want to do anything but try to find this perfect model. If she found lesser model, but the accompanying feeling was overwhelming, then she could tap a model even more illuminating than previously imagined. Her active imagination would be servile to her experience.

She worked furiously to counteract the apparent contradiction. This would mean surrendering her creative urge to something more mystical. She would lose her power to affect her visions. She would simply leave herself open to be seized by this effervescence. Rather than the detailed path of her education, she was being seduced by other experiences that would approximate the frenzy

I really believed my view. Her image said everything to corroborate her witnessing. The wide-eyed at Restless did not approach that same openness on her part. Would it leave her unprotected? Already, she was being affected her own need to duplicate the transcendence. The same rush to get high had penetrated Restless through and through. Once imagery gave access to paradise, that ecstasy became valued for its own sake. Even if the sensation short-circuited the ability to recall the details of a revelation, the desire was immediate. It took away the observer’s ability indeed to influence the conditions of her apprehension. She was waiting to be carried away. It replaced education with a prostration before the mystical experience. *I am ready to get shaken up. Take me! Take me!*

I had only contributed to the weakening of her case. Thea and Kuke sought to exaggerate their own claims. They wove this fictional tapestry from night to night. But could they read the novel that they created. And what would follow?

If only as a desire EA had returned. It raised the real concern. Could anyone become EA? Were her characteristics only those of everyone who tried to effect knowledge into a program for life?

The tribulations of EA could be transferred to Linda.

–He just pulled me over the couch. We had the best sex while our friend Bill was in the other room.

>>Bill had a crush on Clayton.

–He’s going to be my lover.

>>But he was fucking hot. And even if he liked guys, I thought that he had a thing for me. Bill’s my friend, but I can’t feel his attraction. I can only feel my attraction. I wanted Clayton. Just looking at him, I knew that he’d be a great lover. Gay guys are because they realize how much sex is part of our lives. It helps us communicate. It makes us who we are.

>>Clayton’s look was exceptional. It said something to me. It said everything to me.

>>Bill wanted me to consider his friendship. But there was real chemistry between Clayton and me. When he went down on me, I knew that he liked women. Sex was everything for him. He was like a god. And I opened myself completely to him. No holding back. Kissing and sucking and flowing together. And we fucked so good. Just fucked and fucked and fucked until we couldn’t move.

>>I only wished that we could have gone past that point. That was rescue. It took me out of myself.

From an early age, she had yielded to such propositions. She expected that guys wanted that from her. Her history had eroded her will. There was no boundary separating her from the world. Everything flowed together.

–Are you with someone?

–That guy there.

She pointed at some eager stripling already coming out of his skin.

–I’d like to do him right here so that you can watch.

She laughed at her taunting of me.

–Let’s go out to your car, and I’ll fuck you, and then you can come back and take care of business with your friend. It will be your bonus.

And I followed along my fantasy to its actual conclusion.

–I want to go back to a time when I needed to leave the light on.

And the demons that entered her room had total licence. There was nothing that she could do to stop them, there never was anything.

She became more and more paralyzed by the frenzy. It left her pent up and full of shame. Then she let that incredible pain be her pleasure. There was no holding back for anything. But she found all her energies were misplaced.

For the moment she transmuted into another girl, fool’s gold, Angel.

–Angel, what are you doing tonight? The devil’s work.

–Everyone says that to me.

–And how does it make you feel.

How was Angel different than Linda?

–Just because guys think that I look a certain way, they all think that I want to be like that. Like their perverse fantasies.

–But don’t you want to just let yourself go. An afternoon of doing nothing but love-making.

–I still need to wake up to paying my rent.

–Is that your paradise? Someone rescues you from this place?

–Never.

Linda resounded with the same never. But she could feel that excitement wash over her. Why not shack up with some miscreant if he had that certain something.

–In the first few minutes, I know.

What else could she know. She was bowled over by just such sensations.

–I can't stop myself. I never can.

–Do you feel helpless?

Would more and more intense kisses get her to talk. Would her story come pouring out in all its helplessness? What could she do to let it stop?

–I don't think like that. My lover and I just broke up. We hadn't been having sex. I just walked out on him. Actually, I'd started doing one of his friends. It was delicious. My lover confronted me. I told him that he was a terrible lay. I called him a fucking junkie. He does so much coke that his dick just gets all numb. I can't do anything about it. I can do anything about him. It used to give him such stamina. I didn't know what got him going.

>>So there was this guy. Years ago, I saw him. But our timing was off. We met the other night. It was awesome. We hooked up. He said what I needed to hear.

Was she performing as well as Kuke. Every word was part of her impending ecstasy. She didn't have a story to tell. She was the novel in the making. Did Linda and Angel lack a stage. Kuke had a performance. It extended her sexuality. But it was asserted in its independence.

Ivy had tried to import Jean-Luc's philosophy to Restless. But it was easy to dismiss her approach as a charade. She was so used to the farce of Go Wild. You promised a man something. And he believed his own fantasy. He let the cash flow. Some of the newer Initiated gave a more down to earth rendition of the same performance. This seemed to be more the speed of the late night haunt.

And it went beyond Angel's image or Linda's libertine adventures. The look—it said something. Linda worked on her hair. She had that incredible pout. She spoke your fantasy in a way that never seemed forced. She had a dirty mouth, but she didn't seem to regale in the trash. She made you believe because she continued to believe. This was a far cry from EA. Or was it?

Did EA's attention to her own ecstasies only make her just as vulnerable as Linda? Why Kuke? What was the appeal of this sylph.

–She's a nymph.

–She's a numpho.

Each night she could resurrect the same magic. Would she succumb to the first soul who listened to her story.

–I don't want to dream of paradise all my life.

And the passion would flow, until it was finally drained by other pursuits. Who was going to mow the lawn? The trash needed to be taken out. This place was going to shit. Then I stepped in. I gave your life purpose. Would this be her purpose?

–You could eat off her floor.

Would this be the ultimate in her sex rituals?



–Why does she dance barefoot on this floor?

The Initiated tried to alter the landscape. An exceptional look that said something.

–I'm not afraid.

–How do you stay so thin?

–I'm just lucky.

–Are you afraid to eat?

If you ate too much, it only left more for the vampire to devour.

–I thought vampires drink blood. I didn't think that they ate flesh.

–It all ends up being the same thing. It's about wearing you down.

And this mythology seemed to make them all more available. They had surrendered already to the night. Their flesh was already willing.

They believed the frenzy. This was intoxication. If they could seduce by a turn of the head, they wanted to be blown up with the same precision.

–I don't think that I can hold back.

Worse, they feared the light going out. They didn't want to burn at home without someone feeling the same way for them. The night needed their presence.

–I think that they really do drink blood.

The Kamikazes presented a more formidable case. They were held by the same cultural influences. They enjoyed the music. But they had already pushed the performance to the next level. Their twists and turns on the dance floor made them more adept at changing the world around them. The world was just too rigid to take their imprint.

*MY BODY SAYS SOMETHING DIFFERENT!*

–What do you want?

She wanted to surrender to the inside beyond the inside. The desire to be vanquished took form in the myth. The initiation.

–Nothing else give me this feeling.

A dance. A melody. They were only a glimpse of this more intense high.

–He will take me!

Glen had perfected his technique within this same church. He knew how to elicit worship. Pathetic. But this was what was meant by submission.

–Where can we go?

–I don't have a place. Can I crash at yours.

–As long as you don't steal anything.

But the admonish was only temporary. When you had no currency, you needed a key to the stars.

–You're not going to mind if I borrow something. I'm doing all this for love.

And then the accusations.

–Don't you work? Don't any of your friends work?

–Of course we work.

–Who's going to hire anything that looks like that?

The prejudice would cut deep.

–I always look like this.

And the exceptional look would be confirmed when she stripped off her clothes. From then on the belief would creep in. Who could resist?

My rent is due. And one of those urchins ripped me off.

–I’m having a bad night. Come out to my car. I want to talk with you. I need you to hold me.

And they folded in nicely together. And he went way beyond her inside to finally attain that exterior. The outside.

–I am free.

–My body says something different.

<p>push out there for the most intense sensuality</p> <p>I want more than this. <i>Beyond words!</i> more intensity...beyond expectation</p>	<p>you get a <i>story</i> my breaking apart I am not really whole! this is why I’m so free</p>
--	--

The only way to keep the image was to distort the body. Make the body do what she wanted. How could she create her discipline. Days without food. Without sleep.

And her counterpart. She was losing control of her form. She could never get enough outside of herself. She was always outside of herself. Not a body. Just a form. And her physical body was becoming unrecognizable to her.

–I can’t stop.

Kuke wanted to impose order. The body as a technology. This had been the intent of the operation. She was nursed back to health because she had learned to live outside herself. And when she regained her physical form, it was a supreme expression of will.

For Kuke’s story, you needed to turn the pages faster. There was not this intellectual puzzle to contemplate. She did not inhabit silent nights without answers. The turbulence rippled around her.

–You can’t take flight without taking on a little upheaval. Let the body shake. Shake in time to the music.

Kuke abstractly engaged the struggle against the Initiated. She was drawn to many of the same goals, apprehension of the paradise–ecstasy! But she did not want to give up her preeminent position at Restless.

–I am still running this show!

The newcomers could only hide in the shadows.

In the confines of Restless, Theresa only felt like a sitting duck. She hoped to heaven that she wouldn’t repeat the same story over and over again.

–I want you to like me.

–I’ll tell you what I like.

This was nothing like home. There you could be sure if someone cared. Caring was an

afterthought. Something deluded. Something that accompanied your high. If it got in the way, you had to dispense with caring.

–I like a lot of people here. You look great. You can do the same.

She felt even more pressure to accede to the image. Still there was something too natural to her approach. She wasn't ready to have herself remade and repackaged. She wasn't Kuke. Seh didn't want to be,

Guys seemed to like the difference. They assumed that there was something unique about her. Kuke seemed more driven by pure satisfaction. She had readjusted her biology. Theresa still felt tossed by the tides, by the moon cycles.

Just to survive here, you had to adapt to the game. Even if you believed in your feelings, they needed to change with the other players. And the shifts were often violent. The moment that you expressed trust you were left open to abandonment. And Theresa felt this pull all the time. There was the incredible promise of rescue. She would fall for it time and time again. At the same time, she was all tied up with the night. She couldn't go back to the same innocence, the same dreams. She needed to pursue pleasure for its sake. This meant taking a chance at every opportunity. She worked to enhance her attractiveness. She needed to be on point every second.

She wondered if she could even say no. She did. But she found that her selectivity was becoming identical to others here. The glib, the immediate gratification, the guide to the pleasure zone—all these she couldn't resist. If there was doubt, if there were any real complications, she would beg off. Even she became jaded. Not to show her fatigue, she devoted more and more effort to elite reaches of satisfaction. While she never could subscribe to the culture of Restless, her performance made her committed to the same lifestyle. In essence, the culture only accompanied that style. It insured that the lover could sustain her satisfaction whether it was real or supernature.

Was it she? Was it someone else?

Tonight. She wasn't out at Restless. Did anyone even wonder?

If she had been in the room, all eyes would have been directed her way. As it was, she was completely independent from the night. No one thought about her.

Did the freedom offer the route out of her entrapment?. No one was trying to draw her back. No one was calling her to come visit. She was completely apart from the place.

–I can't give in to this at all!

If the independence was total, there was nothing that could take her back. Even if her friends coaxed her to go out, she would need to resist. What else did she have?

She opened a book and turned a few pages. She didn't feel like talking. She thought about watching TV. She tried to lose herself in a movie. She could have a nap. But she didn't want to stay like this all the time. What were other people doing. The phone conversations.

–Are you going to Restless tonight?

Was there something else to talk about? If the night had its contours, didn't the day have its same effect. She could develop a new angle; she would hide in the day. But if she wasn't doing something during the day, she felt useless. The apartment was already clean. She didn't have to work. She didn't know how to be any more productive. Restless had nothing to do with

the other players. It was a way to shut out the lull of the day. Nighttime could encroach into the daylight and take over. The day could live for the night.

How had she found any independence? She needed the voices urging her out. It was a cloudy day. She felt listless. She didn't want to go outside. It was not bright enough for a true day. This was the revenge of the night.

She felt out of character. She was not one of the creatures of the night that haunted Restless. She didn't want to look back on some terrible incident that had driven her to this place. What was she without the intersection.

Theresa continued to long for her intersections. In another world, another girl live independently, she would not look back on Restless.

What did Restless promise? The ecstasies of the moment were too much for the body.

–I'm too high.

Another distraction would enable the body to progress to the next point.

–Do you have something for this?

The exhortation had new meaning. The psyche worked to string these raptures together. The high was no longer a feeling, it was an implication. Where all this energy moved. Could the body accommodate the new imperatives?

From that point on, everything became an intersection. The only way to sustain the high was by immersing the self in the scene. A level of excitement was assumed from origin.

She readied herself at home. With each adjustment, she felt the growing excitement. She had already crossed over. Even before sampling, her rush was already approaching an elevated level.

–I can't come down from this.

She needed to hold on to something real. A quick drink. Something to lead across that passage.

At times the physical form seemed like an impediment. Everything needed to become more liquid. Everything needed to flow. A narrative developed.

THE FLAVOR	An exorbitance. A feeling. Something appealing. The taste.
THE SATISFACTION	The devouring. The contact. Confirmation of the taste. The sweetness.

He pulled her in the washroom. They were together in the stall.

–Do you have something from me?

He looked at her. There was a commotion at the door. A man barreled into the adjoining stall.

They look at each other.

–What is going on in there?

They couldn't even whisper. Their smiles said it all.

–What are we going to do?

She followed her rendez-vous into the men's room. Her heels made a clicking noise on the floor. Her walk was exaggerated.

–Where are you?

–I'm in here.

The silent witnesses were on the verge of cracking up. They could see her fishnet hose.

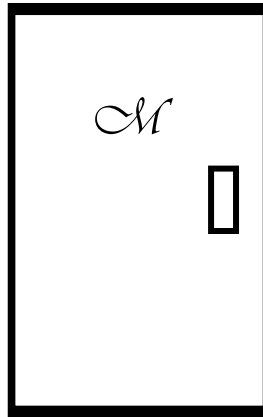
–Is she working?

–No one works her.

She was chewing gum loudly. She took the gum from her mouth and placed it her purse.

–Are you ready for me?

She could already taste him. She didn't like the taste.



He was slow to get aroused. She began to stimulate him by hand. This was going to be a chore. And what was she going to get out of this.

–Do you have something for me?

She couldn't come out and ask him. She looked down at his erect member. Better something than nothing. In the other stall they could hear his cries. He sounded like he was getting killed. It first made them feel the humor. But they were enjoying it too much. While the woman did her work in one stall, the voyeuristic couple started to kiss. The man brought his hand to rest beneath her skirt. She felt weird going along. But she was excited. This was her high. Soon the two of them were swaying. It was an extension of the assignation next to them. It was hard to remain uninvolved. She was hesitant to take him inside her. But she liked him. And she wanted to feel good. It made her feel really good. There was no reason to hold back. The intense feelings made her forget any possible shame.

What if she became excited on hearing the story. Was it her story, or was she only hearing it second hand. Just thinking about it made her feel dirty. She started to massage both her legs. She touched herself with a fluttering motion.

The story progressed to entice a reader. Not as absurd as the first couple, she had gone in

the stall with the hope of getting high. Probably nothing else. But she couldn't help giving in to the situation. How deep would she have to go to let it affect her.

–I would never have done anything like that.

Theresa denied her involvement. She even denied having heard the story.

–It went around. The third girl had to tell about what she heard.

–They were just doing drugs.

–She didn't hear it that way. She didn't think that it happened that way.

No one wanted to imagine Theresa giving a blow job to a random guy in a washroom. There was promise in that look. She wanted something different. She wasn't like Ivy or Kuke. She had values.

–Like what? How are you so different than that guy. You're not going to penetrate me that deeply. You don't like it that rough.

>>What if I like it a little energetic. Are you going to tell everybody that I like to give blow jobs to guys I don't know in the washroom? Are you going to approach me expecting a little satisfaction on your own? Is that how it works?

>>You're not going to make me bleed. Is that how you're different.

She was rolled up in a ball in the middle of her living room floor.

–Are you OK?

–Yeah, I just need to be someone else for a while.

Theresa didn't want to say anything else. She needed to save her energy for that night.

–***Did you see her face?***

–What are you talking about?

She imagines another sexual scene. The bodies are already wrapped in passion. He is thrusting away. All that she can think about is that touch.

–Is she satisfied?

–Did you see her face?

–She's not barking.

–Is she making any noise.

–She's cooing.

–She's having fun.

–That's what he thinks.

–Don't read too much into a scene like that.

The light washes out her face. It is not a public performance but it might as well be, How would Jean-Luc have staged the scene?

He needs to engage the jealousy of the participants. To have a man watch his lover be taken by another guy.

–She is chained. She is not doing this willingly.

The man unchains his victim. She give in voluntarily. She wants to hurt her lover.

–Something is fucked up about the scene. Everything that Jean-Luc does requires these women who have been beat down by their histories.

–That's not true. Many women like the risk. They like to perform. They like to let go.

Experiences that start off as painful end up releasing massive amounts of pleasure.

–That only contributes to the perversion. Any women would naturally feel crushed by such imprints of pain. Once you're so fucked over, nothing makes a difference.

–If I needed a hammer to get off, then I'd realize there was something fucked up about me.

–You said that you wanted to get paid to fuck.

–If it was a fair exchange.

–How can you attack free expression?

Theresa didn't need the theater of Jean-Luc. She was already stretching her own bounds.

–It's what I have to do to be myself.

All along she was hiding this from herself. She wished that it was her scene. That her least gesture was an art form. It all reminded her of home. She needed a greater high to jack her present plateau to the next level.

–I'll eventually be able to get here naturally.

That's why they still believed her face. She tossed her curls in the most idiotic angelic gesture.

–What am I doing to myself?

–Just let go. This is only going to get better.

An off hand comment by Infra could easily dismiss the attempted inroads by the flock of interlopers.

–Isn't she that girl who Trey banged in the washroom.

With his dramatics, a silly rumor had the veil of truth. It all upset his vision for an evolutionary sexuality.

–Hadn't someone mentioned going beyond desire?

It certainly wasn't Infra. He still twisted the night away with Gene. But he gave this wonderful illusion of purity.

## **BEYOND BEYOND DESIRE**

The path lay somewhere between Infra and Theresa. Everyone gave out some hope that rescue might not be far behind. For my part I wonder how the tokens of self had transmogrified into the particles of desire.

The self is extended.

$$(d(d)) = (\sigma(\sigma)) = 2$$

The tokens of self ( $\sigma$ ) are summed to equal DESIRE ( $\mathbb{C}$ )

$$\sum_{i=1}^n \sigma_i = \mathbb{C}$$

What I like.

$$m\sigma = \alpha$$

$$m$$

$$\sum_{i=1} \sigma_i = \alpha$$

I see what I like because it reminds me of something that I really like, something that I desire.

- You can't separate your delights from your sexual desire.
- What if you could?
- I can't imagine what that would be.
- It is outside of imagination.

-What interests you grabs your attention. You can follow how  $m$  colors the token of interest:  $\sigma$ . This is represented by  $m\sigma$ . You can taste the flavor. It excites you. There is the transformation of a dream image by the imagination. It feels good. It relaxes you.

- More like the transformation of an aspect of the imagination by a dream.
- Exactly. I need a nap.

-I can't do enough to make it happen.

-It'll happen for you. Just close your eyes and try to remember a time, a place.

Something that you loved more than life itself.

-I can only think about dinner.

And then you felt yourself getting pulled along. Her body had been that trigger. You got away with yourself. Something more. It was all so smooth. You left the bathroom to go the main dance floor.

-What happened?

-I just left the bathroom to go to the main dance floor.

-She was there.

-Who?

-The White Princess.

-That's still desire. You can't get away.

-Someone takes my coat. It's one of the urchins. I left it in my hiding place. He found it. He gave it to RIP.

-Did RIP ask him too?

-RIP is doing this strange dance. Like a snake. There is no one else in Restless.

-It could be the Cube.

-Thea could be there.

-You keep coming back to DESIRE!

-It's Kuke.

-Or EA.

-Now it's letters like a mathematical code.

-K-E



–KE

–KÉ.

–Kuke is now KÉ. It's a code. It says something. It opens up a door. It closes a possibility to Theresa.

–Theresa can't be stopped.

–It's raining. No one can be stopped.

–I need to stop KÉ. She's going to destroy Theresa.

–THÉ has to stop KÉ.

–Something like that.

–It could be anything. Just the story gets me going.

The door closes quickly. Theresa slips out. She is being watched by KÉ. The suspense is heightened.

--KÉ isn't going to do something in the club.

–Like what?

–All that shit that went down with Thea.

–THÉ again.

–I'm starting to see a pattern. EA came back. Courtney came back. And now Thea.

–I don't think Theresa wants to get taken over like that.

–There never was a Theresa.

–I don't think that she'd like to think of things like that.

–There never was a Thea until we saw her that way. We saw her as EA. thEA. THÉ.

–You're going backwards now. You have DESIRE. Now you're creating a character (☿) for desire.

☿(☐) = EA

= THEA

= KÉ

–What about a substitute?

= THÉ

–We're not ready for that yet.

–She's getting away. She's getting away.

–If she's getting away. She's go something with her.

–Drugs.

–Money.

–A purse.

–Something to hold on to.

–She's stolen KÉ's heart.

–Romantically.

–No, literally. Like the Tin Man who doesn't have a heart.

- She already is pretty mean.
  - She’s going to get meaner before things are over.
  - Theresa shouldn’t try to mess with the story.
  - Theresa is the story.
  - What is the story,?
  - Taking something for the real thing.
  - The substitute.
  - Exactly.
  - But the adjustment, the shift, the flavor. It’s not a substitute for desire. It’s the original shift that DESIRE just appropriated.
  - I don’t get it.
  - It’s not that a drug high approximates a sexual high. You might talk that way when you talk about the physiology. But it’s not really like that it all. It’s just a shift. And a summation of all those changes.
  - A little bit.
  - And a big bit. You just get knocked down by the feeling.
  - A calling.
  - A voice.
  - Something spiritual or supernatural.
  - But that’s you whole problem to being with. You start off with these differentials, and the next thing you blow up this story beyond all proportion. Characters that seem like to be out of War and Peace turn out to be just losers on Peachtree Street
  - They are all trying to write their past.
  - And you jump in and write it for them.
  - I am getting to the core. The core of the image. What gets them out in the first place.
- To put it in play.

☉ The core of the image.

- And you repeat the core. That is the story. She takes a risk. She changes her hair. She alters her makeup. Then she needs to get out there.
- How does she do it?
- She makes an appearance. It all adds up. She becomes part of the night. The core separates from the self and attaches to the night.
- Just like the token of the self if separated from desire.

☉ the core

α the image projected

–This was the Cube. Everyone there had already gone through the arduous process of distilling down there image to this core. They found that it was tied to the display. The risk. Getting away from the determination by work. Moving off into a new zone. This was the

PARADISE.

–But the image projected, that wasn't everybody.

–That was the theory. Everyone wanted to go out in that space. But there was a fear of self-destruction. The battle with the night. Only Billy and Thea could push out that far.

–That's when the story came in. EA, the theory EA brought Thea to the next level.

Beyond any rivalry.

–But she lost her preeminence.

–Courtney had fire. She could dance way beyond the tune. Thea primarily posed for the moments of the tune. She tried to break time down into these snap shots. It was a paradox. She couldn't feel time in between. But Courtney wasn't a full-bodied image. She needed an enhanced story. An EA.

–Now everyone is trying the same thing.

–There's not the same risk.

–There's the image.

–What else?

–The belief. You need the same belief.

–Where does that come from.

–The belief comes from EA. From the FICTION. From the PARADISE.

–If you can't get there naturally?

–You have to make it artificially.

–At the same time, there are these mini-stories. Imagine the scene from Jean-Luc. These men can pay to see their fantasies. They are no longer fantasies.

>>In the crucial scene, he takes a lover away from her man. And she is exposed to the caresses of another. This is more substantial than feeling desire in and of itself. It makes you part of the story. You assume that you could be the man who steps in to assert his desire. To take the lover.

–What if the lover doesn't want to be taken?

–You learn to make the offer. You work. You adjust your days to your desire, and you make enough to pay an exorbitant price. But you get what you want. You can offer rescue from the puzzle. Come back to my place!

–What is his place?

–It is more of a chamber.

–Are these rules for the bedroom. An etiquette of the bedroom.

–No, it is more rules for your toilette. Your wardrobe. How to stand. How to dress.

What to say.

–But that is all part of the chamber.

–The torture chamber.

–So that is what he wants. His house is just that. This place of fear.

–Something like that.

–You can't stop any of this, can you?

–You hope that you can.

–How?

–If he can't pay the price.

- That just makes him work harder.
- That's the illusion. Then he can't enjoy the fruits of his labors.

He works "harder" :  $\Delta\lambda$   
 He applies it to pay down the exorbitant desire:  $\mathbb{C}/\Delta\lambda$   
**What is the result?**

- Jean-Luc gives him satisfaction.
- What does he get at Restless?
- He gets love!
- He gets screwed!
- He screws himself.
- What does he do?
- He tries to trick the game.
- How can he do that?
- At Jean-Luc's she adapts. She accepts his offer. She eventually leaves him. But for now, she accepts his offer.
- At Restless.
- He's fucked.
- Is that the story?
- It's not a story. It's how it really happens.
- Can we dispense with desire?
- We are trying . Bit it's something about image.
- Or not about image. Even the core assumes breaking down the intimate connection between desire and the night.
- Who was going to do that?
- Infra.
- KÉ.
- We're not ready for that yet.

## A CERTAIN SUNDAY

KÉ was in a fit of consternation, the Count knew that something had to be done, and Billy was at the point of abdication. There were already report about Lucky's But the Set had remained in its residence.

-If we represent an actual movement, it should be able to go where it pleases. The kingdom can hold together if we move the sight to Lucky's.

The Count speculated. He could see the demise at Restless. If they were to hold together, they needed to expand. He leisurely considered his options. A full appearance would not be a problem. They would subdue Lucky's by force.

I had heard rumors. I had already been to Lucky's. I liked the idea of a new place. The Kamikazes had already challenged the old foundations.

-It's time to move the headquarters.

–I’m not advocating that. We have to explore.

Billy was still devoted to Restless. He loved the Midtown vibe. A change in locale would threaten the mix. Downtown wasn’t as easily fortified. There were the rolling hills surrounding Restless. It was all part of the logic.

–This is an ancient seat of power. There is force immoveable here.

But the Count’s strategy seemed to sway the Set. Something was wrong. The challenge of the Vandals meant that the empire needed to expend. It needed to take the pressure of its seat of power.

The opportunity to see KÉ away from Restless struck me as particularly fortunate. She could her assert herself as substantially real and not just an effect of Restless. It was a Sunday. It would be late night. It was like a tea party. I was overjoyed. It would primarily be the Imperial Set.

How had I been clued in? There was still an old school bus in the Lucky’s compound. Most of the time was spent outside in this area. The locale had the sense of time stopped. The group needed to hold still for its portrait. The camera panned around the smiling faces. KÉ seemed to be everywhere at once. I was overjoyed. The Count was working the space. He was trying to reassure everyone that they had made the right decision. Billy had opted out. So the rest of the crew had to be culled from the various extras that had dotted Restless. Even Infra and Anastasia were not to be seen. The Set was putting on its former face—all elegance. There were echoes of the Cube. Times had changed. But had the Imperial Set.

–It’s time for tea!

There was never any tea served. And the alcohol consumption was heavy for a Sunday. The managers of Lucky’s thought their gambit had worked. The Count was equally convinced of his success. More than Billy, he had really abdicated his territory. He wanted to be a social mogul. His associates dominated the night. But that was only because the rooms were virtually. Where would the group reside if these massive halls were full. What did the Imperial Set have that could sustain an occupation. The sole force KÉ didn’t have the appropriate floor for her tarantelle. What did this architecture whisper to these Titans.

There didn’t seem to be a changing of the guard as it was still the Imperial Set in dominance. But the room was populated with ghosts who told a different picture. The myths of Restless could not overcome the phantom fold. They hung together.

Even if the rooms were not entirely hospitable to KÉ, she still captured my fancy. Up until this point, I had connected all her charms to the place. It was a simple dreamlike of the former Queen, Thea. And if I now expressed my new allegiance, it was to offer her tribute in her palace. Lucky’s had its appeal. But I would return to Restless to see KÉ.

## **PRUDENCE**

“Dear Prudence, won’t you come out to play?”

It was Saturday and Prudence was ready to answer the question. Not so deathly as the Initiated, she was to assume the title of *Princess of Darkness* for Restless. Not that Restless needed such a Queen in waiting.

Prudence made her mark on an uncertain Saturday. Uncertain because Lucky's had still not made its mark on the scene. But we embraced its fresh approach. The downstairs dance floor carved out a contrasting space to Restless. Carved out was literally the picture as the space had been pulled together from the former vaults. Even the DJ booth rested in such a cavernous perch.. The DJ peeked out of a hole cut into the metal. His view cut off significant portions of the floor. I was drawn to the opposite wall. Their Prudence absorbed herself into the shadows.

–Dear, Prudence.

–She's the Cure girl.

The music was the right mix to tantalize the newcomers. It enhanced the darkness without forgoing the glamor of Lucky's. The downtown fashion was a welcome change from Restless.

Everywhere there seemed other appropriate shades. Like Prudence, they combine style with a devotion to the dreamlike. If Restless was the everyday of the night, this was the coming alive of the imagination. Desire was not confined to the limited cast of the Peachtree hideout. Anyone and everyone could take their turn at Lucky's. This was before the word had spread. There was still the sense that we had found something unique. And we were making it ours. There was no need to even think about Restless. The night came live in its own right. We couldn't look back.

From this one mystical creature, my eyes were drawn to others. Everyone lived this rare moment. Could it last? Would enough people be drawn here to make it a viable option. Downtown seemed so far away. No one would walk here. It didn't have the illusion of a neighborhood bar. The sleek lines would have been so welcome in Hollywood. But this was Atlanta. Such ostentation seemed almost Continental. The South wanted to retreat into its order. Or conceal its sin on the mean streets. It wasn't polite to celebrate decadence.

## **INFRA FINDS A DOUBLE**

Prudence's migration to Restless seemed almost immediate. After a few weekends at Lucky's she had accommodated herself to the permanence of nightlife. She hardly had to return home. She was accustomed to long flowing clothes. She hid behind these lines. With such appeals of Lucky's already pushing her to the point of satiation, she needed something to take her over the edge. A couple of weekends later, she was adopted by Infra as a new pet.

–Prudence get me a drink.

Prudence didn't seem to have a lot of money. At the same time, she was never lacking for cash. This served Infra and his needs. He had formerly depended on Ruby as a benefactor.

–Fill me up.

–I'm not a gas station attendant.

But Ruby had obliged. She liked to indulge Infra. But she saw how he sucked up everything around him. She wanted some distance.

–You may have a little more hip than me, but I am ultimately cooler than you are!

–Girl, don't get lost in the darkness.

Gene was already becoming impatient. But he still needed Infra. Prudence seemed more

willing to take the abuse.

–She hangs out with us all the time now. She even watches me take a piss.

–I do not.

–You wish that you could.

She couldn't keep up with his drinking. But she liked the constant company. And he needed to come out all the time. She had an excuse. She brought some clothes with her so she could stay over, and pretty soon, she was at the place all the time.

–I think that she watches us have sex.

Prudence had just left the room. We were hanging around near the entrance to the theater. Her eagerness seemed too much for even me. It turned Infra's life into an open book. For once, a major figure at Restless couldn't live in two worlds. There had been nothing like this since the bedside sessions with Anastasia.

–Admit what's really going on. You've let her jump in with you.

–We don't do girls. It's almost like she wants a sex change.

–What do you mean?

–She wants to be one of us.

–You don't mind her around all the time.

–It makes us feel like celebrities.

They valued her audience. It helped them extend themselves more and more. Where Infra was into more challenging music, he had moderated his taste with Gene. Now with the influence of the Kamikazes and Prudence, he felt that he could be more himself.

–She's getting an education.

–Infra never sleeps.

–I do sleep.

–But your endurance is getting stronger.

He was still sucking on his straw.

–I don't want to come down. This is too much fun.

–You're like everyone here.

–No, he's beyond everyone here. He's making a play for KÉ's position.

And that was that. Infra had been in the shadows for a while. But he was the natural successor to KÉ. He had not deserted the club for Lucky's. Sure he'd gone down there to see what the commotion was.

–I never have been there yet.

–I thought that we saw you down there.

–RIP was there, not me.

Even if he had been there, the appearance hardly contradicted his permanence at Restless. Now he wanted to consolidate that position. He wasn't going to miss a day. I would witness his time there. With RIP and me, we became the present fixtures here. I was even down at Luck's half the time. I would always rush back for some Restless time.

Prudence was standing him up. He realized that he needed her to impress his reign. They offered a vision of the night that was more formidable than KÉ. She had dabbled with coke. She had enhance her experiences with ecstasy. She had embellished the highs of Halo and Bliss. But she still remained on this side of darkness. Infra was starting to crawl behind the mirror. The

Imperial Set ignored him. They were debating the shift to Lucky's. But Infra was slowly making inroads. He was setting a standard that was going to be impossible to follow. He could proclaim himself sovereign under these conditions.

For the time being, the Imperial Set really believed that they were a group. There had always been that feeling. But they had never been able to mass anywhere. The Count thought more of his feat. He had rendered Billy a figurehead. Billy still doubted the Count's strategy. He recognized if the Count were correct that he had already surrendered his crown. KÉ's presence was essential for the realm to maintain its foothold. She had followed the Count in his march. But she made herself at home in Restless.

She was vaguely aware of the back scene activities of Infra. He had none of the flair of her dance. Could an exploration of this mystical space beyond the night really act as a counter to her evocative performances? All her energies had been confined to developing this new identity. She wasn't going to risk her supernatural gains for a an uncertain leap into the nether world.

KÉ, the Count, and Infra were engaged in an uneasy alliance. They kept the action at Restless. All the while they conspired to bring down the monarchy that supported them. The oligarchy was eating away at itself from the inside.

Prudence felt privileged to have been included in these new intrigues. For the moment, all the power was focused with her. If she had recognized this fact, it would have been deeply disturbing for KÉ. As it was, KÉ was miffed about the preponderance of newcomers trying to occupy her seat. Under these auspices, she had made the royal march to Lucky's. It had none of the magic that she expected. She followed the Count back to her natural home.

So the monarch would lose himself in the night. He was somewhat impressed by Infra's stamina. He had always devoted himself to the party in a more intense way than his advisers. The Count regaled off of the social affairs. Billy still clung to a state of being that was all the more engaging. He had projected his image into the gulf in a more natural and in a more imaginative way than the Count. He had always walked the line towards the supernatural. He just needed examples to enhance his own performance. He threw himself into the hedonism of Restless. That was why he ruled. His image supported the his actions. His blood boiled. He had always depended on decoys to provide a distraction, to open up the claims to new frontiers. He sent Infra into the darkness to colonize new regions for the psyche.

## **JAZ**

With all the excitement of Restless, the basic presentation had changed little. The music alternated from rare moments of originality to the tired dance formulas of the mainstream. The Kamikazes had exposed how rotten to the core was this approach. But the population accepted it. Lucky's was still a distant threat. So Restless didn't need to give up its title to this up and comer. But the signs were there, and the club was not preparing itself for the coming storm.

Jaz loosely associated himself with the Buford boys. His tastes were much more encompassing. Only Jerry had a better collection. And Jerry was still pretty much a recluse. We realized how oppressive were the Imperial Set. Jaz and I would gather on the stoop of an abandoned warehouse and look over at the courtyard of Restless. We had liberated this tiny principality. It was to be a democratic paradise. We did not accept the tyranny of the club. It



would be difficult to depose the social order.

We were rooting for Infra. He was still too absorbed in his own nobility to pose a real threat. But he liked good music. He knew that it was time to challenge the night. His body would never be able to sustain itself in the subsequent levels that he attempted. But we were with him all the same. His success would so upset the restraint of the Imperials. We celebrated the coup from our new land.

–The music sucks in there.

–Sometimes I just listen to my walkman in there.

–I’ve got an idea.

I went up to the house to get a boom box. Soon we had our own tapes blasting outside of Restless. The Free State was victorious.

The two of us jumped up and down. We were just crazed with our glory. We celebrated an independence like no other. Inside, Infra was continuing his campaign. Prudence was propping him up. Outside, the rebellion had begun. Fires burned everywhere. Victory was in sight.

–Why didn’t we think of this before.

–I’ve talked with Tommy about doing this.

–We’ve got to get more people out here.

–I agree. But we don’t have lights. There’s no heat. It takes a hearty soul to rough it in these wilds.

–We can live for this moment.

–Or the next time that Terry shows up with records.

–I’ve been seeing Blaise a lot these days.

–Sara had a crush on him.

–Until she learned that he was gay.

–I think it too her longer to let go.

–It’s the image.

–I heard that he was turning tricks on Crescent St.

–That’s just a rumor.

–But Terry’s been hanging out with Cathy. And Jimmy goes back to Knoxville. Blaise is the only one who’s really on his own. I think that he’s got used to it. He used to be like that before he came here. Some guy found him when he was 13. He paid him to have sex. It’s been the same ever since. I think he hated it at home. He squatted with Terry back there. Now this.

## **LONNIE BACK AND FORTH**

Lonnie had continued to make his presence felt behind the scenes. The Count knew about the threats to his pre-eminence. He needed to keep the scene going in his favor. He had been one of the first of the Restless crew to ally himself with Lonnie. The association had been pretty loose. They needed the coke to flow if Restless was to keep its magic. Lonnie realized that it was getting too hot at his residence. He set up an alternative drop point at the Pompey. Older men stayed at the Pompey in the hopes that they could entice street boys to rounds of enjoyment within the curtained room. Now Lonnie had an accomplice at the Pompey.

He had been able to survive at his old haunt. But the Pompey was just too close to the action for him to really get away with things. Ed had been a beat cop. But he worked his way up by connecting himself with a number of other shady cops. He spent a lot of time with the owner of Restless. They had worked out a payoff scheme with the city and Ed was the go-between. They moved Ed to narcotics. The promotion seemed logical for someone who already prowled Midtown.

Ed made his reputation by rousting street whores. He wasn't immune to skimming off the top for his enjoyment. His truck was littered with used condoms.

–I'm not going to take you to jail if you go down on me.

–You're not even working this beat anymore.

–I'm still the law, and you're in violation.

Ed busted some cheap street hustler–Teddy– on a narco rap. Teddy had been spending a lot of time at Restless. His swimmer's body was a natural attraction. He often had his shirt open to show his developed chest muscles. He chain-smoked and was very nervous. Lonnie didn't trust him. But he seemed the perfect flunky for his Pompey operation. When Lonnie caught wind that Teddy had been picked up, he had to use his connections to make sure that he didn't get taken downtown as well.

Kids were still heading up to the Pompey for drugs. The Urchins found their fare at the motel then ran back to Restless to enjoy their harvest. Lonnie had to keep his operation going so he wouldn't make Ed think that he was wise to the whole thing. But Ed was setting the kids up. All around Restless, the word was out. Stay out of the Pompey. Two of the kids didn't listen. They were sitting in the back of a squad car.

Ed still believed that he could get the source. Lonnie had out maneuvered him. Teddy was useless. He'd let it all go down in flames at the Pompey. But he had to make it look good. He couldn't embarrass Ed immediately, or he'd have to take the heat himself. He just needed to make sure that Teddy didn't talk.

Things got murky from here. The patrons of Restless needed a new supply. But there was some weird stuff turning up. Rumors involved a chemist at Tech. But there were still kids heading down to the Pompey.

–Rome wasn't built in a day.

Infra laughed about the whole thing.

–It's going to be bigger than K

Infra never believed the rumors about Cascade K. It would have upset his pretensions that he was the most extreme guy at Restless. His image said that he was the undead. He couldn't have someone else chattering on about his after life experiences.

With all the commotion, he now had his chance. Instant death was flowing on the pipeline. Infra was going to tap it.

Restless had set a standard to keep up with the latest thing. It wasn't faddish like Lucky's. This was the real stuff. This was why Infra had not migrated downtown. He was still at the seat of power.

–It's called ICE.

Later, other drugs would take this moniker. But the Ice that kept Infra awake would be like nothing ever seen since. It had its own rules. These were the commandments of the night.

And Infra carried the tablets of stone.

–Swallow this!

The first night brought nothing unusual. Gene trailed behind Infra. Prudence and Ruby still fed him drinks. His rant echoed by the back bar. Restless at its best.

Infra's little circle retired to his apartment.

–You got to come with us.

–I need to crash.

It was tempting. But I didn't want to give in completely to the demands of obscurity. I needed to rescue myself for the light.

Everyone ended up crashing on a bed, a couch, the floor. But Infra was still up dancing to tunes. He was like a wind up toy that wouldn't stop.

When everyone woke up in the late afternoon, Infra was still sitting in a chair and listening to music.

–Aren't you going to sleep.

–I don't need to. This stuff is great.

It was great. He kept bopping around now that everyone else was up.

–This stuff is amazing.

–It's regressing you to childhood.

He laughed.

–You all need to try this?

–What are we going to do before we go to Restless?

–Prudence wants some new clothes.

–I've got a credit card.

–Is it yours?

–Of course it is.

Then she mumbled something.

–It's my mother's.

–You're our mother.

–Keep it in the family.

–Let's have a group kiss-in.

Infra became a little pissed.

–Kiss off all of you.

His tantrum was short lived as they all agreed to get dinner at the mall.

–I like being somebody.

–Infra, you're our hero.

–You're going to need heroes.

–You can take care of what we're afraid to do on our own.

They were all prancing out the door.

–This is wonderful.

Infra's outbursts just seemed to be part of his usual disposition. And there were things to aggravate him. The constant company was wearing him down. No one thought anything of his moodiness.

–It's not the ICE. It's a wonder drug. You all have to take it.

Prudence had considered. Gene had to go to work. And Ruby had her own concerns.

–I like to sleep. It’s a drug enough for me.

–You’re just too normal.

–Shut up, Infra. You’re a fucking freak.

–You’re calling me moody.

–No, but you seem a little on edge.

–The Ice may not be so ideal.

–You don’t know that for sure. Don’t bring me down.

Gene thought that the group might take some of the pressure of his relationship with Infra. But Infra seemed more unbearable with an audience. What could shut him up for a while?

–Gene, is something wrong?

–I’m OK.

Prudence pulled him aside.

–This isn’t going to last.

–I know. But it’s been rough on me.

–Just have fun. Get some drinks at dinner.

–I’m drinking too much.

–I don’t know what to say. Try to be part of the fun.

–It’s not much fun for me.

Infra wouldn’t let down. The more the merrier.

The group expanded by the time that they hit Restless. They made it a jolly lot in the back room.

–There is no coming down.

There were already rumors about Ice. A few other kids had got a hold of smaller doses. Everything looked transfigured at Restless.

–There are flowers here.

–I can finally see the castle.

–Here’s to Billy the King.

Billy felt that he could live off this new supernature. He hailed the opening of consciousness.

–This is beyond awareness. It is a new era. The world is inside out.

–You didn’t take any.

–I can live off everyone else’s high.

He got pulled aside to do a line in the bathroom.

–It’s going to be a long night. You don’t want to give out too soon.

He knew that he was going to crash later. He just needed to be out of the public eye.

–Wasn’t Infra bopping around last night?

–He’s been watching Terry on the floor. He needs to get into the act.

Terry and Infra were both shaking what they had. It was a tumult.

–This is amazing.

–I thought that I saw Gloria.

–She’s somewhere around here.

–She’s looking for her purse.

- She needs to watch out for those fucking Urchins.
- Some people don't know how to sit still—always getting into other people's stuff.

Gloria still had money. She could keep her subgroup fueled. Terry found it more profitable hanging with her than Cathy.

- We haven't seen Cathy for a while.
- She's out looking for some party favors with Blaise.
- She'd love this Ice.

It was unclear how Terry got himself going. Gloria needed some boy to represent her hope. She was building her dream home from money that she got from her divorce settlement. She had a fleet of cars and a pile of money. But she didn't want to let the cheering stop. Each new celebrity required candy to make him happy. And the constant supply offered her a fountain of youth.

- We can all share our high.
- Terry hung around her old house while they all waited for the new place.
- Gloria, you're siphoning off money from the new house for your partying.*
- I've got enough money. I can sell a car.*

She watched Terry and Infra dancing. She needed to get in the mix. She was enthusiastic. But she lacked for grace. She moved with the music, but her body held the same pose.

- Don't you feel that they're showing you up?
- I'll be her long after they're gone.
- She was Infra's cheering section.
- You don't want some Ice.
- I hear that it's bad stuff.
- Look at Infra.

Ice was going to put every other drug out of business. There were more rumors about a bust at the Pompey. Someone had given up two more urchins.

- Where you going Infra?
- To the Pompey.
- Gloria was going to drive everyone.
- Keep away from the Pompey. It's dangerous there.
- Blaise and Cathy were just there.

- Something doesn't add up.
- They ended up going out for food.
- Infra, don't you want to eat.
- I don't need to eat. I am Invincible.
- Infra the Invincible.

- No, Invincible the Invisible. I have conquered Death!

His parade awaited him back at Restless. But they headed back to the apartment for one of his celebration dances.

- I will not be stopped.

Tim watched Terry hit the floor. He mocked his gestures in an effort to capture the style. He had admired the Kamikazes since they first made their way to Restless.

–Look at them, Theresa.

She was distracted by another boy, but she was still fascinated by the complexity of their moves and their interplay. She watched from afar. She didn't have the commitment to join in.

Tim had been drawn to Jimmy. But Jimmy was doing something more serious tonight. He just watched Terry. Gloria came and said something to him, but he kept dancing. He shook his whole body. He pounded the sky. He turned around and around and around.

–Wow!

Tim was rendered speechless. When Terry left the room, he jumped up and tried again. He still felt so clumsy out there.

–I'll make it someday.

The night continued long after Tim headed out with the other Buford Boys. He had to work in the morning. How did these other boys have the time.

When he arrived back in his room, he put on some music, and practiced some more. Neither Terry nor Jimmy would ever notice him. Perhaps there would be a new boy. Someone less experienced. He would be a Terry for this new boy. He would let the boy approach him. They would share their insecurities about the night!

Tim questioned the vision of Restless. He lived for the culture. But he felt that there was no place for him. What was so unique about KÉ that she couldn't be replaced by some reasonable imitation. He felt his dance was all the more dynamic than hers. An observer might note all the pent up emotions that were released as he moved. But he had none of the restraint of KÉ. She could dazzle by deliberately holding back the climax of a series of moves. He was just bluster. They both were expressive. But she pointed a way out. She was transcendent. He underlined the prison that was Restless. For so many, they could only grapple with the shadows. KÉ gave the illusion that they were all close to the same passion. They were not.

In her early days, Theresa seemed to engender more interest than KÉ. She was easier to approach than the blonde sylph. Despite her sprite nature, KÉ still created awe. Theresa could be the girl next door. Knock, knock. KÉ feared her club was becoming too much like the Alabama provincialism from which she had escaped!

The news from the Pompeii was not good. Ed had caught one of the Urchins. He was trying to use him as a narc. Ed wasn't too bright. He was going to get the boy narc and Teddy to trap some bigger fish in the hotel room. They'd call Ed, and he'd finish the job. Only Lonnie caught wind of the shit. He was pissed major time. He showed up. He started by kicking Teddy's ass. He left him half-dead in the doorway. The other kid didn't take much to put him in his place. It was a dramatic way to shut down his operation. No one was going to rat on him after that. And Ed was left with two stiffs in a cheap hotel room. He thought Lonnie was behind it. But he couldn't be touched. And that was that. The news spread around Restless like wildfire. It only added to all the hoopla surrounding Infra.

KÉ knew that something bad was happening. All the Imperial Set were advised to lay low. Even the drugs were of a more ruthless character. This favored the cutthroat feelings of the

moment. There was no protection within these walls.

Infra knew that his time was coming!

–I can see God!

–You think that you are divine.

–Whatever you want to think!

–Exactly!

The high had lasted for two days and nights without subsiding.

–He’s either going to disappear, or he’s going to die.

–Or he’ll take one of us with him.

–He does need to be stopped.

–He will be!

## COMING OUT

Many saw him as heroic. But lives went on that were hardly affected by Infra. She had come to Restless in the same way that the Orphans had entered the city. There was no fanfare. Hardly anyone turned their heads. No one had stared at her or talked about her. But she felt totally comfortable in the new setting. In a small town in Alabama, she had hid herself. And the hiding only made her hide more. She could barely recognize the face in the mirror. She didn’t want to be recognized. She didn’t want to blend in. But that meant she was a freak. And she couldn’t take the ridicule. It was hard getting up the nerve to leave.

The pressure got to her. She couldn’t work. She hardly socialized. She didn’t want to be a recluse. She heard music in her head. There was a place where she could blast it confidently with friends.

She made the break. She moved to Atlanta. Found work, found roommates. Now she had found Restless.

–I like it here.

We said hello whenever I would see her. She appreciated the camaraderie that we all shared. This was outside of the Imperial Set. We were the echoes that went way beyond the rumors of playtime. This was the hollow of Restless.

One night she pulled me aside. It was a more solemn moment. She needed to pour out her soul.

–KÉ was always about glamor. She played the part of a celebrity. You were different. You weren’t afraid to be yourself. You didn’t care. You took real risks, and then you returned to the shadows. You weren’t afraid to walk in and out of that door by yourself. You knew you power. You were willing to share it.

>>You gave me the chance to rewrite my past. I’m not the person that I was. I can’t go back to those games. The teasing. I’ve turned my back on all that and escaped.

>>You were great for me. I thank you. You are so comfortable with your sexuality. It doesn’t let it bother you what anyone thinks. It’s not just about being a pretty delight.

>>I’d go home night after night thinking about what had to be done. I never had the courage. I still wanted the dreams of marriage that everyone else had. To be with a nice guy, and

all that.

>>You showed me that I could dispense with all that. Thank you. I admitted who I am. I came out. I know that I am gay.

I nodded in solidarity.

It was another night, and Infra was still alert. He didn't make it to the club. Prudence was here for a short while, then she ducked out.

–Some other kids got a hold of Ice. They were rushed to hospital.

–I hear that it's poison.

–Infra swears by it.

How long could he keep this going?

–This is getting pretty crazy.

–Someone's got to bring him down.

–He's going to crash permanently at this rate.

–That's what he wants. He wants to be immortal.

–So much for Cascade K.

–This is the real stuff.

There was a weird sense of anticipation as we hung back at Restless. It was as if we were in a hospital waiting room. But the lights all said dance.

–Emergency! Slow down!

We were all flagged for speeding.

I was doing the late shift. I was performing the death duty. I waited for some word back about Infra. I couldn't dance anymore. I ended up in the back bar listening to a user's monologue.

–I'm here doing coke at 5:30 in the morning because I need to feel this pain so that I can get to this place beyond my family, beyond my religion. Where what I feel is just me. That's why I've stayed up for days. Why I'm in this place that makes it impossible to go back to my old life.

–You're not making any decision for yourself. You're letting the night make all the decisions for you. And then you pretend that you're part of this great drama.

–You don't know me; you don't know what I'm going through.

–You don't even know yourself. What you're putting those around you through. That's all part of knowing yourself. But you've closed off your feelings to only register this limited range of emotions.

Was Infra ready to confess? The story that he saved inside, the one that he wanted to share with Gene, was that story now flowing out as he found no rescue in the division between night and day.

–I'm challenging time, and, thereby, challenging how the cosmos can affect me.

In fact, he only seemed more pathetic in his attempt. He would have been better served by immersing himself in the same silliness at Restless. He would have found more like-minded souls in his search to create the ultimate psychic upheaval.

–I'm trying to help, but no one seems to be listening.



No one seemed to be speaking as I couldn't figure out if these were my words or the eloquent explorer at my table. She almost fell over herself as she ordered another drink.

–Where is Gloria?

–I think that she's with Infra.

–Infra's at home with his crew.

There was little that anyone could do at this late hour. I walked up the street to the apartment. I needed to sleep even if they didn't.

Once we rewrite our past to fit our present, we don't want someone else stepping in and destroying the fine balance that we have finally created.

Prudence was the only one still awake when it all happened. She swore that Infra had almost. First he seemed to go through some type of seizure. At first, he teetered on his feet. Then he tipped over and started shaking all over. He rolled around a few times.

–Then he had convulsions. It was so awful. I started screaming. Gene ran out. After a few minutes of all this fury, he was just lying there. I couldn't find a pulse. Gene was trying to get an ambulance out there.

I didn't get the rest of the details right. It seemed like the ambulance came. But Infra was moving around. And he told them to leave.

On another version, he was on the stretcher when he woke up Terry told everyone that the ambulance never came. Gloria had to take him to the hospital in her car.

–What really happened?

–We think that Infra died and rose again.

–He's never going to be the same.

When he finally came back to Restless, he had that weird look. I welcomed him back, but he didn't seem to be the same.

–What happened to that guy?

He walked like a ghost. Slow deliberate steps. He still held a drink in his hand. None of it seemed natural. He was already dead.

Infra's defeat by the night was a significant event for Restless. His challenge had meant everything. He was a pioneer in the outer reaches of consciousness. He had almost colonized another realm. But the overall effect had been a failure. An unmitigated failure. Infra's star fell very quickly.

Prudence seemed to suffer even more. She had put stock in his transformation. He had seemed utterly pathetic under the effects of the drug. He needed to get help early on. He refused. It was farce as he pretended to step further and further out there.

Gene finally had enough. Infra had always had a nasty side. But it was part of the joke. The Ice only made him mean. He ordered everyone around. He assumed that he was becoming a saint. He was only regressing.

KÉ reasserted herself in the midst of the disaster. She had placed no credibility in his search. She still offered a more positive view than Infra. Of course, she only scratched the surface. What could be done here?

Infra could still play the image for Gloria. Restless still needed the appropriate mannequins to signal its fashion front. While Terry was really extending the culture of Restless,

Infra could still play the part. It added the needed numbers to their team.

Billy took it hard. It reminded him of his own mortality. He found Infra glamorous in a an odd sort of way. He like the fact that the standard was not too narrow at the club. This might encourage a more restrained approach.

The Count took the opposite tact. Infra had challenged the staid view of the Imperial Set. It was not enough to make an appearance at Lucky's. They needed to be more assertive. Infra had failed because he did not go far enough. The new blood was upsetting the power that be. They would not take it lying down. They needed to prove how daring they were. If they couldn't get drugs from Lonnie, they would get them from somewhere. But the altered states were proving the true measure of the club's adventure.

## NATE

Nate had drifted with his sister from Indiana. He was the antidote to the nonparticipant observer. He was a clothes designer and seamstress. He envisioned costuming KÉ and her band of pirates. Unlike Mark, he served as the perfect witness to my fascination with KÉ. We affectionately called her the *Kook*. We would watch her start her dance:

–There she goes.

We timed the twirling arm gestures. It was a move that was so distinctly hers. Her rhythm was precise. Her intent was without ambiguity. But it felt entirely natural. There was no hesitation. The form was part of her being.

–Nothing could be this perfect.

It was the body kinetic, the idea in action. The movement as will.

–I love it.

It wasn't something to be imitated. The dancer needed to ride the same energies that she heard in the music and take it elsewhere. This was the improvisation. She threw a theme back to the other players. They picked up the beat and played it with their sensibility. It only provoked her more. It only added to the effectiveness of her initial gesture.

Our testimony had an endearing affect. This was our satisfaction in watching her. We found the completeness. She beckoned us on her journey. We accepted the invitation. The night had a magic due to her belief. And we accepted her perceptiveness. It was no longer simply the music. She helped us break through.

We did not look back. There was no drunken story that she spun on the verge of collapse. Her out folded arms encompassed the space. The puzzle was solved. Whereas Thea drew all the light to her, KÉ projected outwards and onwards. She embraced the whole universe. It was infinite, but she incarnated the omnipresence.

–I can feel the ends of the universe.

Neither Nate nor I wanted to disturb the awareness. Our words told the story. Her actions confirmed it. We didn't want any distortion to crumb the play.

For Nate, this was his clothing line in action. She was stretching across the sky. No limits. But it was a vector. It had speed and it had direction. She brought time alive. Infra had tried to turn time upside down. She simply stretched it to do its undertaking, what it was directed to do. Nate and I could sit and watch. Or I could take my cues from KÉ in her dance. Both

paths were consistent. The dance was perfect in itself. It linked dancer and observer.

What Nate and I witnessed became a universal. Any other viewer in this place would be equally entranced. It was not due to a simple appearance. Rather the appearance was the ideal vehicle to carry the self into the cosmos. She could project into her constellation. We were bathed in the starlight.

–How can we keep this going?

–As long as we are all here, it is eternal.

But if she was absent, did that arrest the process. Did the dance express what was mute in her sexuality? Or did it only extend that intensity to another realm? Nate and I felt content in being able to watch her. We had the necessary realization. Others tried to capture or own the image. They stopped the dance in mid-course. Even the caress had the affect of bringing her loveliness to a stop. She needed to move.

The barren waste of Restless was always brought to life by the arrival of KÉ.

I now realized that my place in these orbits had changed. I had been wandering in darkness observing the planets as they were pulled along in their movements. But I ventured too close to her sun, and now I was getting drawn in. It wasn't only an observation, I was becoming attracted to her. There was the coincident let down when I realized that all the other satellites were in the same position. I had prided myself on my Cruciality. This independence. I had been affected by Francine. She pulled the stars from the heavens. With her I saw the darker night. I was affectionate with Gina. I was absorbed by EA. But KÉ challenged the very forms that I used to measure my existence. She was my natural cosmos, the goddess. I worshiped her. Not in a romantic way. I took that concept that she imposed on her immediate world, and I generalized it to the universe. This was everything. She gave the sounds that allowed me to program creation. She was the sense before the word. She was the chaos!

From hanging around with the Titans, she first realized her destiny. Now she had emerged. She needed to assert herself while it was her appropriate moment. With her in the room, Restless was everywhere.

I realized that my understanding had been determined entirely independent of Nate. He was taken by the form in motion. It was the same inspiration that marked his designs. The shape had come alive in space. He was enthralled by the phantom, the ghostly promise. But he could not see the deeper purpose. Even if he was absorbed by her performance, he could escape her spell. She was part of his couture.

I was hopeless. I lived for these moments. I gambled on her appearances. I even took delight in her sexual liberty. Nothing could or would resist her will.

–You can't own me. I don't even own myself. I am a child of the cosmos. I step into the void.

She was both here and somewhere else. This elsewhere could not be touched. But she reached in her dance as if to grasp it. This was her kiss. Her caress. Her embrace. She tried to take everything in. Just as she projected out into the world, she pulled it all back to her.

–I can't change you. But I can change how I react in the world around her.

We could try to diminish her influence. But she was everywhere resplendent. Her pleasure was not mere whim. It brought the world to life. She created with her desire. Everyone wanted to partake of that same pleasure.

–The body permits our enlightenment.

In her pose, she stretched out to contain larger and larger swaths of existence. The cartographer in action. Nate saw his pencil forms breathe in life. She took the identical expression and generalized it. The universe attained awareness. From pinpoint to expanse, all vibrated with her sensation.

Nate wanted to internalize the vision. He dropped a hit of acid so that inside and outside could merge. She was the perfect guide for his trip. He could not connect with her physically. But all his perceptions merged with her. It was a wondrous masquerade. He put on the mask of KÉ. He became her. She became him.

As he started to float into the mystery, I felt weighted down by my apprehension. I had given her a more extended reality. But could her touch actually bring it in fuller perspective for me. I danced around her. She fluttered in my vicinity. I felt the heat of the places that she had been. But I was suspended in my desire. A yawn. I reached but I could not touch.

I became a devotee in her orders. I took the vows. I promised to return each night. I was committed even when she was absent.

## EVERETT

Zorra felt that she had the same calling as KÉ. Restless gave her the chance to flaunt her sexuality. Privilege gave her a nonchalance that made KÉ seem like a busy bee. But Zorra projected this image of the sexual dynamo. She just wanted it all the time. She had hooked up with KÉ soon after she came to the club. Her performance gained in notoriety. She had used her *conquest* to enhance her fledgling reputation.

–I was the man!

KÉ laughed about the stories. Zorra was taking herself too seriously.

–I just care about my enjoyment. My bed is not a stage!

KÉ could have accepted the challenge. But she had already reclaimed the focus from Infra. She let Zorra have her way.

Zorra often hung around Everett. As friends, they were a perfect match. She was entirely reserve. He was happy. Always smiling. She was driven.

–Are you doing acid tonight?

His actions may have upset Zorra's plans. Rather than take satisfaction in Zorra's incorporation in the scene, his attention was further directed toward KÉ. He studied her like a butterfly. He tracked her flight. He mapped her wing span. He followed her journey.

When Everett got up to dance, Nate and I both smiled. Here was boy KÉ to a T. Every move, every stop, every gesture, every grimace—he was all KÉ. It showed the perfection of the model. Everett had mapped the habits of his subject. But he had left out the soul. He couldn't attain that form in and of itself.

–There goes BOY-KÉ.

In trying to capture her identity, he had lost his own. Worse, he had left out the key ingredient.

Zorra was miffed. She thought that she could knock KÉ from her throne. But her tryst only made her seem more vulnerable to the *Kook*. She was fucked! She tried to hang on by

being more obnoxious. This became her character.

BOY-KÉ acquired a life of his own. He reminded us of the brilliance of KÉ herself. Even a concerted effort had fallen short of the original. But he was the perfect reminder of her presence. KÉ was off on a rendez-vous. BOY-KÉ could entertain us.

I actually found his performance irritating. If he had actually drawn inspiration from her, I probably would have been more fascinated. As it was, I only missed her more. I needed her light to outshine his weak star.

Others didn't see him like that. They took his dance for a probity. They were drawn to his insights. A boy could outdo KÉ. Mark would have been proud.

–Do you see that boy?

–No. Who?

–He's dancing just like Courtney.

–Sort of!

I ached for the heart. I longed for her return. I lived the poetry. Others were immersed in popular song. Any substitute was good enough.

–I can't have sex with the real thing.

That sounded like Mark. Only he could even assert a desire for BOY-KÉ. He needed to be taken. BOY-KÉ was hardly that aggressive.

## HOW SOON IS TOO SOON

No one wanted to tell the deluded that BOY-KÉ was not the genuine article. *ENOUGH ACID* and the substitute felt just as good in the dark.

–Is there anything else?

An aggressive fuck wore down the promise of something else.

–This is not theology.

Where was Jean-Luc when we needed his illustrious insights.

–How much would you pay for your trick? What more do you want–caring? Get the nurse costume.

We were all looking forward to a scheduled performance by the Smiths. “How Soon is Now” had been the theme song of the Imperial Set. They like the opportunity to express limited suffering in public. Kary had made his way down from Alabama to prepare for the show.

–I know it's in a couple of weeks. But I'm excited.

He claimed that one of his Birmingham friends was the model in the video.

–She'll be here. You can meet her.

Immersed in the smokestacks and Stan Brakhage effects, I would be able to touch the hand of an actual EA.

Kary was a clothes designer. Entirely flamboyant. He was what Atlanta needed. He seemed like a natural. Restless had opened this opportunity. The word had spread. Artists started showing up with the hope of shaking up the scene. His contribution was real, not the misplaced efforts of a Zorra.

When Kary dance he was totally himself. A bit of James Brown. A touch of new wave craziness. And a total thing on his own!

He was a welcome addition to the frightened passengers of the Starship Restless.

–You’ve got to move down here.

–I would. But I’m doing too well in Birmingham.

He didn’t need the artificial stimulants. He was naturally wired. We all shook to the funky grooves of the night. Check and double check. Back to the beat. The darker intentions lost some of their malice for a few brief moments.

Funk to the left—and back.

For the moment, we even dispense with a little sprite. His EA would be our new model. We were after bigger things.

It was with great disappointment that we learned that the Smiths’ show was cancelled.

–Who did this to us?

–I was so looking forward to it.

I would have to wait before I could step into a full-fledged movie. We tried to find an ounce of humor.

–Atlanta will never recover.

In the bathroom, the Count was already pushing the night to the next level. This was his theme song. He couldn’t retreat on his own. He needed a court to share his misery.

–I want some more of that shit.

–Sharing would be nice.

–How soon is too soon?

The Count made a strangling gesture with his folded hands.

## **LIBERTY AND LIBERATION: FIREWATER**

–I want to share you essence

–You want to swallow my cum

She wasn’t thinking so vulgarly.

–I want to drip my champagne from my mouth into yours.

They glided in the liquid kiss.

He wanted to attain that high supreme. He wanted to feel it deep inside his body.

–This is where my desire becomes your desire.

She thought about a series of programmed gestures.

–It’s not like you’re a sexual machine. But at each stage, you feel driven by the feeling.

He pulled on her butt cheeks and imagined entering her.

–Do you know what I’m talking about?

Even his words gave her the sense that he was inside her.

–This is about one thing.

–What.

–Your high. Your sex. Your pussy.

–I have no trouble controlling my desire.

She could sense herself opening up.

–How can I tell that you’re ready for me?

–Are you ready for me? Do you think that I'm hot?

How could the token of his desire have a coincident reply in her? How could he remake her world in his image. The two bodies criss-crossed without intersection. Then they collided.

–Some things you can't stop. You can't help it.

–It'll be OK at the time. Afterwards, I'll hate what happened.

–You can't hate yourself.

–I just want something more from myself.

–There's nothing more to want but liberty.

–Where does that come from?

–It comes from the body.

She could sense that he knew something. She wanted to acknowledge his feelings. She felt understood. She didn't want to lose him.

–How can I show you how I feel?

–It's not something that you can speak or explain. You have to let your body follow its path of liberation.

All this moved to a total independence of his excitement.

–You drive me crazy with desire.

She smiled. She had trouble taking him seriously. But she knew what it would take to convince. She wanted to believe his concern. But all that she needed was his touch. He needed to be constant. He couldn't lose his ardor as he was deep in expression.

–Sex as art.

–Do you really believe that?

–If we don't have the talent in other forms, we need to use the flesh as our medium. We sculpt with our fingers.

–How long does that last?

–As long as a kiss of fire burns on the lips.

She tried to calculate the equation.

–What about other temptations?

–You have to risk yourself if you ever hope to find out.

He held her hand as she stretched it out.

–I'm not sure.

–If you were sure, I'd see it in your eyes. I can wait.

–What does it mean to wait?

She wanted to believe his offer. She could feel her skin come alive. This feeling needed a focus. In the small of her back she could feel the core of those feelings. She wanted him to touch her there.

–This is a place that will make you feel protected. It will open you up for more feeling like this.

He knew what this constancy meant and how it would absorb her during passion. They hugged as a reminder.

–I still can't trust you.

- You want something more.
- A token of your affection.
- A gift.
- Something real.
- A kiss.
- Something that lasts even when you're not around.
- Give me a pen. I could write on you.
- Do. Do that.

He used his imagination. Then he used his hand. He traced the letters in her skin. She felt chills. She wanted him. But she needed restraint.

- You can still forget.
- What more do you want?
- What more can you give?
- Can you say love?
- We hardly know each other.
- Do you every say love?
- I can get you a drink.
- What will that do?
- It will make things easier.
- Only for now. It will loosen up the tongue. But we'll do things that will be easier to deny tomorrow.

- Not if we go so far out that we can't return.
- That's often the best excuse to deny that any of that happened.
- What happened?

He again touched small of her back. She melted before his touch. She didn't want to let him know.

- I need a drink to steel my resolve.

If she gave in just a little, he come on even stronger. The drink could quiet her down.

When he came back, he couldn't find her. She had headed off for the bathroom. She needed to collect herself. This was all moving too fast. When she needed to lose him, he would never go away fast enough.

She looked in her purse for something to take. She wanted calm. Not the calm that she would feel in his arms.

- Do you have anything?
- I'm all out.
- Did you see that guy that I was talking to at the bar.
- I'm not sure.
- I'm not either. That's my problem.

His eyes wandered while he waited for her to come back. This was becoming too difficult for him. She wanted explanation. This was something that he felt physically. He thought that he already had a foundation to venture in this place. Work gave him that security. He worked hard, he wanted his reward.

- You've got you drink.



–You’re back.

–You have one for me.

–Sure.

Was that all that it took. The more that he gazed at her, the more that she felt taken in. Restless would do the rest. It always would. It made him feel more confident about his own life. It only took so little to make her consent.

She could sense that something was wrong. But she’d only know how to make it right after she got to know herself better. That was how she used sex. That’s what she was drawn to at this moment. One more drink and she would know for sure.

–Let me go dance. I’ll be back.

KÉ was dominating the floor. At this point, she had her imitators.

The man stayed at the bar while he watched his rendezvous slip away. She could see him watching. She lost herself in the crowd.

–I need my own stability.

She reassured herself. He could only see KÉ as his acquaintance was lost in the flow.

–She’ll be back.

But she found herself drifting in these currents. Before Restless had been drawing her towards him. Now it gave her a chance to disengage. She even followed a group into the other room. She found herself in a new discussion.

–I thought that I lost you.

–I made some new friends.

He tried to blend in. He wanted to take her out of this group. He wanted her to leave Restless with him.

–We’ll get together another time. You know where to find me.

He was feeling frustrated. He had invested too much to give up now. He tried to make her feel the emptiness of the aftermath. But she wouldn’t budge. He touched her back as a reminder as he headed for the door.

Dory walked by the sign.

–The Messiah comes to Muncie.

She remembered the ad. For forty days and forty nights Messiah, the Christian metal band would rock Midwest. Nate retold the story.

Dory decided to go to the concert. She met Dwayne in his red Camaro and his dirty hands.

–What it must have been like.

Sure she had never done anything like this before. But neither had he. She needed to wash everything from inside her.

His brother Bobby had broken some guy’s neck in a barroom fight. He was now in the state pen. Dwayne would have ended up the same way if it wasn’t for Christ.

–Dwayne, what’s it like?

He had a bumper sticker that said God’s limo.

–*I hammer the nails into his cross. Can I be forgiven?*

He turned up the radio.

–*My hammer is swift. My sin is deep.*

Maybe if they had said a prayer or really loved each other, it would be OK if she took off her panties. He could kiss her insides like it was heaven. The Lord would keep them together. Before his brother had been picked up, the drove up to Terre Haute to meet these girls. Bobby paid them, and they showed him all these tricks.

That night Dory thought about her date with Dwayne. He promised to marry her. IT would make her feel like a woman.

–Take off your blouse. The Messiah says its OK. I can make you feel like a woman.

–Nate, are you making this shit up.

–You’ve seen Dory. She’s a friend of KÉ.

–You’re on acid again.

–I used to think that I could see God on acid. Then I started to have sex with guys. I just felt sort of damned.

–Now?

–It’s a big joke. But all that weird shit happens in Indiana. It’s cold in the winter and hot in the summer. Anything goes.

–Dory lived with some freak.

–Not really. But he made her feel guilty about shit. That was just the way it was.

–Dory is a little freak.

–She likes guys. But she tries to make them do the weirdest shit with her. And her and Courtney get into some real scrapes.

–I heard that she broke into some school and stole some stuff.

–I know that she wanted money for drugs.

–I heard that she stole a car. Dwayne’s camaro.

–I haven’t seen her with a car since she’s been here.

–She probably sold it.

–Or never had it.

He was so expressive. His hair was parted on the side. He tried to affect a suave 50’s look. No wonder he could laugh at BOY-KÉ. He wasn’t real himself.

Whatever I did, the night would not yield. I worked to shape the dance around the music. The performance as a whole invited me. It helped me leave a record of this night. Tonight. It was a date etched in the memory. To go back and experience as it had been.

–Who is watching?

It was an empty Restless. There were so many moments like this. Nights lost to a repetitive play list. Who wouldn’t even notice my reserve before the beat.? What I heard that no one else heard. If they only listened closely enough. Who was watching?

If my moves were intricate enough, maybe it would create a pattern. A history. We could work our way back to where I was tonight. We would need to make it back. You could figure out just by looking. What I’d be doing when you were taking a look might help you remember what I was doing when you were not. On an empty floor, I could take a full run. As long as it would take. On a crowded night, I’d be more restrained. But you could figure out what I was holding

back. At this moment, you would remember. In your imagination, you could relive that full floor.

How could you really know if you only watched.? But you would be watching. I would attract your attention for the moment. I would take you back to that other night when you were not watching.

I pretended that you could follow my step. That you could sway to the same beat. And when you're time came. You walked through me to get to other side of the floor. Who would even remember that performance.

–I don't want to think anymore about it.

On another occasion, you might hear it approximately the same way that I did. I would imagine it that way. But it really wasn't much the same. I'd realize all that when you took the floor. You clumsily shared the night. But you did what you can.

I worked to replay the same sequence. It was another night. I aimed to be more appealing with my gestures. What did I need to add? What did I need to take away? You tried to force me to follow your dance. I couldn't. I spun away. Was that the performance for tonight.

It was an empty Restless. My motions were balanced. I acted as if you were in front of me. I stretched out. I returned into myself. I turned and turned and turned. Could you keep up? Could anyone keep up?

You retreated in the hope that I would follow you.

–It's sort of now or never.

–I don't get it.

–It's not about getting into the body. It's getting out of the body.

You tried to sculpt the floor to track the rhythms of your body. At each point that the music invited you to escape from yourself, you returned to your safety. This was your dance. It ended in an embrace. So the variation could never get too far out from this initial point. You were afraid to let go, afraid of releasing that hold.

–Are you there?

How could we return to that empty night at Restless. You could learn another step. As you moved in for your kiss, you pulled away. That was the beginning. And then you pulled away not as a way to get back to the kiss. You welcomed the pulling away as a step in itself. You could feel the contours of the room. And you trailed them with your moves in and out and in and out. There would be easy resolution. Nothing could take you away from what this dance now promised. It did not promise rescue. You danced your independence. You danced to while away the hours. It was the absolute stupidity of time. You let it get away.

–Can you remember what you did?

–Why did you do this to me?

–Do what?

–Take away my escape. Now I'll have to come back here just to figure out what I lost.

## ***CRUCIAL'S DEATH***

*What he says:*

*I WAS CRUCIAL!*

*KÉ*  
*GA GA*  
*CA CA*  
*KUKÉ*

## **BRIAN AND KÉ**

It was an empty night at Restless. KÉ showed up with Brian. I had befriended Brian. He gave me a hug. They played a song that I didn't want to dance to.

–What is this song.

–He heard it on the radio. Now he can't get it out of his head.

–I wish that he would get it out of ours.

I was still sitting there when Brian got up. KÉ was now sitting next to me. I wanted to say something to her. All that I had thought about up to this point. I wanted to tell her. But I was under cover. If I let her know, then Brian would know.

–I thought that you like guys.

–What?

–You're making a play for her.

–I was just being friendly.

–I can see it in your eyes.

–What?

–You're seeming all jolly.

–No, I'm not.

–You're blushing.

–I'm not.

He smiled.

I looked over at her. This was my moment. I couldn't say a thing. Brian came back from the washroom. He looked over at me. We were in the same club. The same goals. We were pushing away from conformity. He was a friend of KÉ. But he couldn't like her in that way. Not like all her fans. That would be conformity.

We admired her. But we couldn't like her. Not in that ordinary way. She had already surpassed that feeling. We had surpassed that feeling.

–What have you made me do?

–What?

In that impasse, that incredible void, I could still feel this incredible energy.

–You know what this is all about.

–I think so.

–It is about our love of the night.

I was one of KÉ's playthings. And she pulled the strings. She was the new EA!

## MARK INSIDE

Willy had tried to be a friend to Mark. He ended up talking with Nate more. He had become impatient with Mark.

–Rita has a cousin. She had a son.

–Really.

–His name is Harper.

–Yeah.

He's 13. I met them while I was working at the health food store.

–Cool.

–I really like him.

He sounded a little young, even for Mark.

–We hang out. She leaves me with him. He tells me about his girls at school. He hasn't had sex. But he's done everything else. He's a curious kid. I tell him about music. I tell him about hanging out. I asked him if he ever had any gay feeling.

–Yeah.

–He's experimented a little. And he told me that he likes it.

–Wow.

–But I never have said anything to him

–What do you mean?

–I'm thinking about him.

–Have you told his mother about it?

–She's cool with that.

–That you have designs on her son.

–She's cool with that.

–It would be OK with her if you had sex with her thirteen year old son.

–If he wanted it.

–You're trying to coax him along.

I believed that Harper may have been curious. I wanted to be tolerant. I imagined a boy who already saw himself as mature. With his father gone, he had probably matured a little quicker in the house. But Mark was assuming too much. And I didn't seem to be doing enough.

–Mark's a fucking child molester.

Willy was more adamant. He saw Mark as the threat to gay culture that he had been trying to escape all his life.

–Gay people aren't pedophiles. Pedophiles are sick people. They're more often straight than gay.

In the open environment at Restless, everything was permitted. But Mark had moved into another place. The crowd at Restless were all adults. Even if a few kids slipped in, everyone was pretty well over eighteen. Here was a thirteen year old, and the rules had changed.

–Willy's really pissed.

–I guess I just thought that Mark has been weird all around.

–Yeah. He told me that he was on medication.

–I guess that doesn't give him an excuse. I just thought if I listened that maybe he'd come out of it. Getting him thinking about all the options.

–But he feels it.

–Yeah, he does.

–And he probably won't stop until he convinces Harper.

–You met him?

–In little Five Points.

–Wow!

–He's just some kid.

–If he didn't know him, Mark would ask if he was cute.

–He's just some kid.

–And Mark is becoming a father to him. He's with him more than his Mom.

–That is freaky.

–I don't think that it's going to stop.

–Mark did say that he has this girl now.

As time progressed, Harper started to spend more and more time with the girl. Mark didn't get jealous. He delighted in the stories.

–They had oral sex. He said that was what he liked the best.

Mark put himself in the girl's place.

–He asked me to kiss him.

–Did you?

–Yeah.

Mark wanted more of a reaction from me. I didn't want to give in to the fantasies. I just listened. Maybe I was helpless. I had hit an impasse all around. My KÉ seemed so innocent to me. But others might see it the same way that they saw Mark's obsession.

Willy threatened to beat Mark up. Or turn him into the police. He wanted to talk to the mother. Mark stopped coming around Restless. He didn't understand where the place was going. He found little appeal in the new crowd.

He gave me a coat, a beautiful coat.

–I'll never wear this. Some designer made it. He only made two. The Count has the other one.

–Thanks.

I gave him a hug. I felt useless.

Nate told me that the boy eventually had sex with Mark. Harper got really fucked up. I didn't see Mark much after that. He went home to get his life together. To get help. He had pushed too far into his night. He must have taken him back to something that he never talked about. I was a little surprised. He always had the need to talk.

Willy was still around occasionally. He had a great casual style. He was never really part of Restless.

I wore the coat to one of our performances. It had seemed too dour at first. So I had lace frills sewn all over. I even had frilly cuffs. Now I looked the part of the dandy. I could feel the

change in Restless, We still headed over to Lucky's. It started to be a Mecca of the club scene. But the action still ended up at Restless. On the weekdays, it was all about Restless. KÉ still worked her magic.

Nate lived the nights on acid. Even when he wasn't tripping, he learned how to capture that particular feeling. I spun my tales about KÉ. He embellished them. If you dwelled on the details, everyone became part of a fantasy world of dragons and princesses. For Nate, he didn't have to dwell. This was all natural for him

I wasn't on acid. I might as well been. I couldn't do anything without thinking about her. I kept flashing back to her dance. My silence before her. I needed to tell her my story. I don't think that she would appreciate it. Thea had lived her celebrity. KÉ had celebrity from what she did—her performance.

—She is coming back.

—It's an encore.

The dance floor indeed was a bevy of KÉ's. So many newcomers had no other reference point. They watched her to learn how to dance. She instructed them how to listen to the music. She could never see it quite that way. She just thought that everyone was trying to move in rhythm. They were actually imitating her dance moves.

—This is really precious.

—I think it's a little ridiculous.

—Why? They're having fun.

—I don't want a clone. I want the real thing.

This couldn't have happened at Lucky's. There was just too much space. Even the downstairs dance floor was too dark to allow her to dominate the floor. People went there to get away from their identity, not to adopt another. KÉ lived as long as Restless thrived. She didn't come back to Lucky's very much. She realized how little it offered to her.

Things were getting a little strange. The script KÉ seemed in evidence. And it worked on the dance floor. Off it, the imitators wondered if they needed to follow the same lifestyle. Zorra had soon been displaced. But new Zorras thought the same way as she did. They felt the need to broadcast all their sleep overs. The pajama party was out of control. There was little of real intent. It was better left ignored.

—Crucial, if you're writing about us, why are you not writing about us.

—What do you want me to say? That you're trying to behave scandalously like KÉ, but you first need a reputation if you want to scandal.

—Don't be so vulgar.

Restless was entirely vulgar in its poetry. It was her pussy. We vibrated with her sex. It would be useless to try to chronicle some other player. Every one of them hung on her moves. They had become her. We all were only a part of her. The surrender. The world as nothing but this arousal. The flow. This ecstasy.

She made her appearances to remind us of her sex. She caressed the dance floor in her auto-eroticism. She was already getting off.

—You all love it.

## GIVE THE BOY A JOB

They came to Restless with nothing to offer but their flesh. They hope to live on their charms. There wasn't enough to go around. Gloria started to collect these street toughs. They could do her dirty work. Construction around the house. Construction around the heart.

–Find my purse. Someone stole it.

–Who's buying tonight.

–Gloria.

As the club moved from hallucinogens to coke, she made sure that her crew was flowing in the stuff. Everyone was a poet. They all gave her their stories.

–He's a brilliant guitar player.

Where was he playing tonight. She still had dreams about an art space. Her vision exceeded the limited dreams of the other clones at Restless. But circumstances would always get in her way.

–I had such plans for him. Then he just went away.

One night she rolled up in the convertible with her gang. It was cast of familiar faces even if the crew was revolving. But tonight she had a new boy. He seemed all of seventeen. He had a longish mane of blonde and dark black hair. And a tongue that wouldn't quit. She believed that she had found poets. Here was her actual bard. Taylor was fluent in a land of the tongue-tied. His sizable talents seemed even more exaggerated under the circumstances.

–What murky stream will I have to ford on this dismal night?

–It's a fucking puddle. Just jump over it.

–To those I love and those I hate, I have a legacy...

He paused. He saw his visage in the mirror, and he needed to adjust himself.

–Are you drinking tonight?

–The devil's brew. I already have a fire burning in my soul. Don't distract me from the prophet's work.

–OK, prophet, tell us what you see.

–Everyone a carbon copy without paper to print it on.

–You be the paper.

–I don't want to drown in a sea of black ink.

–Very funny. Now get a drink.

–I am on more perilous seas. I will pass.

–Then pass the cup so that we may all partake.

–Are you trying to give your Lord Taylor a run for the money.

–A knave has been raised to the level of nobility.

–Are you challenging my honor?

–Taylor, no one would assault your honor. For you are a man of your words. You live by your words.

–And you will die by them.

–How will you take me down?

–With sharp wit and the pain that already shakes your bosom.

–Bosom. I'm a guy.



–And so you shall die a guy’s death!

–And you’re going to do it to me.

Terry was no longer the boy of the moment. He still trailed Gloria’s crew.

–Have you seen Cath recently.

–I think that she’s still hanging out with Blaise. You haven’t seen them here.

–Once in a while.

–Blaise seems a little sick.

–Cath isn’t doing so well herself.

–How’s that?

–She does seem a little thin.

–It doesn’t make her look good.

–Like frail thin. She looks like she doesn’t eat.

–I think that they do a lot of speed.

–It looks worse than speed.

–Death has come over them.

Terry tried to brush it off. It was the specter that always haunted him. He lived it. Blaise was absorbed by it. Jimmy just acted it out. The clones would never get it. They would all try to learn the moves. They needed a more in depth life to grasp it.

–That is a bit elitist of you.

–I’m not fucking Taylor. I’m telling it like I see it. These are artists here. Not just party queens. It’s not just lingo. You have to live that same nothingness. You just want to fill it in, and that makes you more empty.

Terry came to my defense.

–If you don’t like how you’re being seen, get up and change it. Let’s see you dance. Quit imitating, and find your own style

–How can we do that when your style is so dominant.

–That would be Ok if it was true. But you are just imitating KÉ.

–Our bodies are made that way.

–You have to unmake them.

Terry had a point. The hanger on needed a new style. The only way they could find it was trying to copy something that was more complex than they were. They would have to break down the self. They would have to learn how to walk again. How to move their arms. How to fly.

Terry invited them to do so much more. They didn’t want to take his lead. Kuke continued to dominate their night.

–You should object to his criticisms. You had your chance.

–You don’t know what we’re going through. The medication prevents us from thinking about things.

## SEE HER FACE

**His hands rode up her sleek thighs as she wrapped her legs around him.**

**–You think that I’m going to kiss you at a moment like this.**

**–You’ve got a free hand. You know what you can do with that?**

-I didn't think that I needed instruction.

-It doesn't hurt to tell a girl what you like.

She shook her mane of hair. He could imagine it settling on her naked back. He wanted to rush things. She needed to hold him back. He needed to take in each excruciating second of his desire. His hands stopped just where the slit in her skirt stopped.

-Why are you stopping now?

-I thought that it was time to stop.

-Did you see a red light.

-I just saw fire.

-When you see a fire, don't you just panic.

He pulled her even closer.

-How do you like that.

-Squeeze me any tighter, and you'd cut off circulation.

-That dress looks like it's doing something to your circulation.

-And it's doing something to yours as well.

-I thought that you weren't close enough to tell.

-I can see it in your face. You're all flushed.

-It's a little hard to cool down in circumstances like this.

-How about if I just blow a cold breeze on your forehead.

-Don't stop there.

-You've got a dirty mouth.

-And you've got a dirty mind.

-That makes two of us.

-Why stop there?

-The mind and body problem.

-The body and body problem.

-I know how not to make it a problem.

-I know how not to let you mind.

He rubbed both his hands down her back. Her lips came dangerously close to his.

-Are you getting the picture?

-I can barely keep my eyes open.

-The suspense.

-The passion.

-Kiss me, you dog.

-Bark, you little animal.

Tongue to tongue, lips to lips. He gorged himself on her appeals.

- I love the dress.

-That isn't all that you love.

-Look at me.

The lights washed out her face tones.

-What is my name?

-I can't see your face.

-What is my name?

He thought it was Theresa. She would have already faded with this much light. Her lips had more of a pout. Her eye line more character. Sultry.

-Could Theresa play this role?

-Hardly! It requires more of a femme fatale.

-I thought that was her role.

-She tried to read for it. She always came up short.

-Someone needs to hand her the revisions.

-You'd have to lend her the dress.

She is on all fours. He is behind her. He bends down to kiss her. He takes off her panties.

-Is she going to be ready for the sex.

-She's all coked up.

-Is she convinced of the role.

-She's getting enough for it.

-He's giving enough of himself.

-All of himself.

-All of himself and so much more.

-Do you know who invented this?

-I want to say the Phoenicians.

-A physician.

-A Trojan.

-It's all hollow.

-The key is what's inside.

-Or what isn't inside.

-Or what isn't allowed to get out.

-We have to protect ourselves.

-Against risk.

-Make this kiss harder. Then have her move her hand along.

-To let him know what she feels.

-That's another story.

-When does that happen?

-Later in the scene. When he's more aroused.

-But she's not aroused.

-She will be. See how she moves down his body. How she squats and then rises up in the perfect dance move.

-That looks more like sex.

-It's a dance of seduction.

-This is Restless. They're too jaded for seduction.

-It's a weekend night. We can always find a willing candidate.

-Theresa wants to be rescued.

-Can you see her face? It's not Theresa.

-I just see two bodies having sex in a stall.

-It could be two guys.

**–Can you see her face?**

**–I can't see a thing. I'm too excited. I have my eyes closed. I'm too fucked up to see. But she feels so good.**

### **THERESA STORMS BACK**

**Have you ever licked a guy's balls?**

I started working at a convenience store. It was my first job.

**Have you ever shoved your finger up his ass?**

I hated working there. I got a job at an ice cream store. I thought of wrapping my body in ice cream.

**Have you ever licked his ass**

I hated working at an ice cream store in the winter. We hid in the back and felt each other up. I thought that I was too young to get penetrated.

**Have you ever been with more than one sex partner**

I really didn't like the guy that I worked with. He had a dirty mouth. But he knew some tricks. He taught me the whole thing about holding my breath.

**Have you ever watched him take a shit?**

It wouldn't be watching, would it.

**Has he ever peed on you?**

Not that I know of.

**Have you ever performed sex at party?**

Is this a job application?

**Have you ever used hand cuffs?**

To fill out a job application?

**Have you ever been whipped while having sex?**

**Have you ever been fisted?**

**Have you ever been fisted up the ass?**

**Have you ever pussy fucked another girl?**

**Have you ever shoved your breast up her pussy?**

I'm still thinking about the last question.

**Tell us about your first sexual encounter**

I'm losing my memory.

**Have you ever take money for sex?**

**Have you ever taken drugs for sex?**

Have you ever needed drugs to have sex?

–Are you on drugs now?

–If I give you drugs, will you fuck me.

–Will you fuck me on this table.

–Are there any questions that you would refuse to answer?

If you cut your hair, worked out a little, lost some weight, we'd let you play KÉ in our new movie. You'll have to perform in the bathrooms of Restless, but it will only be with girls. We could get you a job at Go Wild. You're not supposed to get off with the guys. But I've heard

about some wild parties after work. A bartender and two or three girls. Use your imagination. You have to be part of this to really enjoy it. When two girls are kissing. You can see the tongues rolling and the saliva dripping.

>>If you were a guy, it would get you hard just like that. You could slide your immense cock into her pussy. Until too much excitement just softened you up like melting ice cream. You know what that means.

**Do you shave your pussy?**

**Have you ever let some guy come in your face?**

I try and not look in the mirror.

**Do you like to be degraded?**

This is all moving too fast for me.

**Does this mean that you are really excited?**

I don't want to think about any of this.

**Do you swallow?**

Only if I like you.

**Only if you lick me?**

Whatever you say.

**A: Do you like how it feels when I'm inside you?**

When is that?

**A: Is this a career move?**

*Think about that feeling. Any of these feelings. Keep them inside you. So deep inside you. Try and not think what caused the feelings. Just think of how they affected you. What was your heart beat? Record that feeling of anticipation!*

If they drained your brain at that moment, what would the drug be? Those stimulations helped KÉ stay in character. If you used them to write your past. What would your future be?

–Take this, and it will help you.

*Go back to the beginning to become KÉ!*

*There is no becoming. Only unbecoming!*

*Theresa thought by being more unbecoming than KÉ that she might eventually become more KÉ than KÉ.*

–I am not into scandals.

–Then you need more restraint.

–You need to be less of a voyeur.

***I feel invincible!***

Theresa had talked with me about doing some songs. She also said that she played the piano a little. I invited her to the place. She arrive a little late. But she was excited. I had her run some songs as an audition. Her voice was a little hesitant. But it had a nice quality. It was a dream having her at the place. I wanted a breeze to blow through the apartment at that moment.

–Time to clean up!

I invited her back, and she agreed.

*–Hello, is this Crucial.*

*–Yes, it is.*

*–Theresa's been having some problems. She can't come by. I don't think that she's ever going to visit again. I'm sorry. We're all sorry. She just needs some time. Time to get better.*

*Brian wouldn't know. He couldn't know that I wanted KÉ. But there had been that glance between her and me. I knew what that meant. Until then, I die in silence*

*Think from grief—not a pretty way to go—smashed in the face.*

*–Now I can localize the pain.*

*I accepted this episode as some kind of swan song. The end would occur much later.*

*–You get your second choice.*

*MIND DISEASED: imposing his own hysterical system*

*–I know you're a great philosopher, but I have one question for you. Even solitude is an intersection.*

*–Someone's having a great party tonight.*

*–I want to spit on them all.*

*–You're such a witch.*

*–I'm casting a spell.*

*–You weren't invited.*

*–They said that we all could come.*

*NEW BLOOD: The Italian Artistic Group*

*Killed the cat—made a design—kept the design.*

***I SAY WHAT YOU'RE ALLOWED TO WRITE DOWN!***

*A smell of flesh in the air—it's a port city.*

*–What are you writing down?*

*–What everyone says.*

*–Who's eavesdropping on you.*

*–That will be in the next section when I am important.*

*–What about now?*

*–I put the conversations in two piles—yes for important—no for not important.*

*–Anything more.*

*–I'm trying to find out who is cheating.*

*–You're just messing with everyone.*

*The house on Bolling Way where they did the spells.*

*Women and 6 ½ seconds.*

*She's a star. Look at how she carries herself. The glances deflect right off her.*

–You won't really die if you don't want to.  
 Come for a ride in my new car.  
 –It's all starting to make sense.

–I haven't seen Tommy for a while.  
 –Our band practices in his warehouse. He lives there with Carl.  
 –That could all happen later.  
 –No, it starts now. Around the World Series time.  
 –All bets are off.  
 –It's not even summer yet!

–We're the internationals, and we're perfect.  
 –I don't want any females who don't understand the problem of being female.

–What are we fighting for?  
 –Our lives.  
 –Vacation pay.

*Legendary Fears* by Kalu. From eternity and back!  
 KE was moving faster than I could ever watch.  
 –You have to sell all your toys.  
 Hold hands and speak in tongues—it's better than drugs.  
 –Mediate gay politics in death rock—the politics of Restless—do you understand?

He held all mankind responsible for the twenty five dollars that KE borrowed and did not repay.

You pushed yourself into the night until there was nothing resembling desire. In an inspired fatigue, one crawls away—secret—in fact you hide desire in a place so personal—hold over every memory of the night.

The party—the stripping of desire.  
 Violence is a KING mask!  
 The make up mask!—it cracks!  
 Drive fast and desire makes you free. Drive fast, drive young, drive free.

–You're free for the moment!  
 –We need fresh blood!  
 –They don't control how they act or where they are going.

As I realized that she was the source, I resolved not to be a part of it. I felt resentment toward the scene. I wanted to kidnap her from the scene. In my disgust, I withdrew.

The club is her sex.  
 –I'm happy for you.

She thought she could purify herself. She really was in love.  
 He didn't trust himself. He started cheating on her.  
 KÉ showed her little mouse.  
 –I thought you were dead.  
 –Let me kiss to know it's real.

As long as images like KÉ and Dovsky pervert people, people can afford to ignore images like mine.

*Loses a game with God, and forced to wrestle history!*

*Brushing the ash off a cigarette  
 Doesn't someone have to pay for all this laughter?  
 –I thought that I was finished with you, and then you came back.  
 Bileti will be back soon.*

*Christiane falls in love with KÉ after taking her photos.*

*Those who enjoy the substance are lulled into an apolitical lethargy. Soon they will reach a point of no return. The illegality will become oppressive for their opponents. Those who participated will feel the need to deny their use. Due to their mediocrity, they will deny the effects.*

*There is no notion of a redeemable soul. Death now seems imminent.*

*The VC theory: keeps driving wages lower—more workers at a lower wage put out a more efficient product. They worry about their performance—SOUNDS LIKE HELL!  
 If I went out, I thought that I would remember what I had forgotten.*

*The missing girl.  
 Some gangster.  
 –I met the wisest man in the world.  
 –How could YOU tell?  
 –All I'm looking for is what you're looking for.*

*–I'm the only one left. (Pretend that it is ending now!) I want to know your secret. What did you do over there?*

*–Leave me alone kid.  
 –Did you rack 'em up. I want to know.  
 –I never left my house. I never went anywhere.*

*With CHH and Dr. Cosmos. He goes in the room  
 –He's making things come back to life.  
 Held in this contraption.*



–*Whose hand did you hold like that?*

–*I didn't do it. I just watched.*

–*But you enjoyed it.*

I met KÉ in a Thea mask and gown. She had acquired new powers. She couldn't be stopped.

–Is all that is left of Thea?

–I don't want to hear anything more about her.

–What about the Kuke mask.

–There is none.

–Otherwise, it would be hard to tell the clones from the real thing.

## THE WHITE PRINCESS

Theresa has been transformed by Dr. Cosmos. Nate is tripping, but he has crossed over to the other side of being. Theresa takes apart one of the white chessman. Inside, she hides a note: I love you–Cascade K. She gives Diane the chessman to take to Lucky's. Diane thinks that it is for her. She takes it and becomes deathly ill.

–Tell Phoebe my secret. She can intercede for me against KÉ.

Later Phoebe has the black king for me. It is intercepted by Diane who is already high as fuck. She is found with the king by KÉ's agents. Diane is kidnaped, and she reveals my attraction for KÉ.

–You weren't supposed to say anything. Brian will find out, and he'll tell everyone.

They let me *rescue* her. I then get caught in *Circular Obsessions*. Diane is afraid that she is going to die. She has to work with Phoebe to find an antidote. KÉ is still hanging around Restless waiting for the bad new.

–What is this Kuke thing? Surely, you are imaging it.

–Everything a man could desire. Everything a woman could want to be.

–You are exaggerating.

–No, it's true because I said it was true.

–Kuke, you're back. Drink the coke. Drink the whiskey sour.

–You're trying to get back at me for Diane.

KÉ took a giant step.

–Get rid of the White Princess. She is against me. She already played her hand. She wanted to poison me.

–But you're still alive. You know mercy.

–Mercy is the first step towards decline.

–The dick is a multi-functional object.

–It is multi-fictional.

Prepare the scenario. I fill in the details.  
Satisfaction without measure.

THE CLONES–thrown into life  
ROY: I need to meet the Kuke.  
We need candles.

The cab driver: haven't seen you in a while.  
–I dropped her off here.  
–I couldn't find any other kind of job. So they have me driving a cab.  
He found substance for the VC.  
–It's simpler than that. No one hates anyone here for long.

The White Queen is frozen by the black pieces.  
–KÉ, aren't you going to do anything about this.  
–We'll use a genetic mistake when KÉ isn't looking.  
–That's what freed the clones.

–Sacrifice the White Queen for Cascade K.

–I was immortal. But I got bored so I came here.  
–Dr. Cosmos, how could you have you here.  
–I feel guilty that I don't pay for it.  
–I thought that you were more cynical than that.  
–I am.

Kuke and Immanuel

–You're too much of a friend for me to do this to you.  
Halo/ Bliss–she has the glow.  
With Pam, Immanuel has a plan to get money. He will be KÉ's agent.  
–How dare you. Theresa is not well.  
–You have to stop her before she becomes more powerful.

–Did you fuck Bud.  
–I'll fuck anything that moves. It's my club!  
–We'll convict you with that lie.  
–Why don't we talk anymore. I feel that you don't like me.  
A novel about a blonde who dyes her hair.  
–Are we in Marseilles?

The purity of Image: the Messiah comes to Muncie.

In the private room, no one can come in—it gets rather boring.

–I can't believe that you aren't allowed to call her.

–I have everything that I want here. I'm waiting for someone really important in here.

–Sure you are.

–I need a shiver of K

Bileti is going to come back soon.

–I need some money.

The White angel

–Let's go kiss somewhere.

KÉ kills the angels.

–They're never very pretty anyway.

The trend scene needed to expand. It resorted to suburban dissemination.

–We need to clone KÉ

It's already in progress.

Betsy

The clone

the neutral pair

keeps changing form to respond to desire

gets locked in the transformation

Ange the clone

starts to spy on everyone for Crucial

chemical accident

K was in time

THE CLONES

By this point KÉ had found her imitators

Why does she follow us?

I haven't the faintest idea

Watch us having sex

Shannon

masturbate while you watch

delight in her eyes as if she was part of something

humiliation

Nate saw how everyone was becoming a KÉ.

–They will really try to clone her.

–They have.

Ange and Betsy drove us crazy.

–I think I'm seeing double.

–You’re seeing triple.

Little dancers from Alabama. They were KÉ’s revenge.

–If you want to imitate me, you better do a good job.

–We are going to need them if we want to control Lucky’s. Ange gave me a big smile.

–I thought that I was going to work with Betsy.

Betsy had pigtails.

–The clones are really nice.

–They’re nicer than KÉ.

–We’re all nicer than KÉ.

–I see them like missionaries. They are being sent in the world to spread the gospel.

–KÉ is smarter than the others in the Imperial Set. She has to expand. She makes two more or herself.

–They’re both bigger than KÉ.

–But neither really is KÉ.

–That won’t stop them.

–They’ll be needed at Lucky’s. It’s out of control there.

–At least they thwarted the White Princess’s poison plot.

For the moment, KÉ had things in control. But Lucky’s was fast becoming the new focus. She needed to do her dance.

–When you all move to Lucky’s, they’ll forget us here.

–Nate was right.

## POPSICLES

–We better enjoy it while we still can. It will all be different after Labor Day.

Lucky’s was still a future threat. KÉ still reigned at Restless. Spring started to feel warmer. It would soon be oppressive. Restless had set up a bar in the courtyard. Nate had just been over there.

–Look what they have over there. Popsicles.

They would be needed once the heavy summer heat set in. For the moment, our *utter confidence* was expressed by Ange and Betsy sampling the banana popsicles. Nothing could be finer. No enjoyment would be as perfect. It was a slap in the face at all the garishness of the night. If these two girls could find satisfaction with popsicles, then we all could find harmony in our creative impulses.

The popsicles expressed the most coordinated example of the Clones and their doctrine. Their sheer exuberance was so much more convincing than any addled junky trying to raise some life in the darkness. Their excitement was everything that we had first associated with Courtney. But there was none of the backroom intrigue. The Clones spoke to a world before the Imperial Set. They didn’t have airs to keep up so all the social connivance vanished with them.

This was at first surprising. They had seemed like the perfect extension of the KÉ regime. But they were everything about KÉ that had nothing to do with the scene. It took us a while to realize this. While most of the Orphans still directed their envy towards the Imperial Set, the

Clones danced and had fun. They didn't even get involved in KÉ's games of chance and desire. They shared a completeness. What had prompted Courtney to stray so far from their wide-eyed awe at the world.

In some respects, these popsicle girls were the farthest thing from our reality that could exist. We gave them so much credibility because they represented that difference. We never really belonged outside the confines of the night. If they made us feel less freaky among the other freaks, they only encouraged us to dive deeper into the shadows for an unearthed secret. They were more supernatural guides than actual participants. We could learn from our guides. But we still were undergoing all the threats that influenced us previously.

The Clones moved so much faster than KÉ. On the dance floor, she still asserted her velocity. But the Clones were everywhere. They had almost cloned themselves. They were at Lcuky's on the dance floor. Then they made it back to Restless before we even noticed that they were gone. They were ready to greet us as we walked in. Their ubiquitous presence made them symbolize the new Atlanta night scene. It was not just Midtown. If the Imperial Set would not infiltrate downtown, the Clones would. Nothing would be the same.

–Are they here?

–You better get you popsicles.

–I think that we're out.

–You better not be out. You better not.

Desire as a lack  
consistency  
food

–As long as you can't get it the way it's promised, you'll be back for more.

–They'll have to feed me

Phoenix

--This is a guidebook for *Etiquette in the Bedroom*.

Dorothea Rules for Etiquette

being devoted to cool

integrity of one's station

mediating without a concept

If I wanted to make money from them I would have to be nice.

If I wanted to make money from them, I would have to be mean.

–You keep me searching for words to touch you

–There's nothing to touch because you have nothing to lose

–Give her a picture of a wolf eating a bat,

–Write her phone number on your hand.

–She has already touched me.

–We're all sick of who we love so we are searching for a new victim  
 The shock knocked him off the sidewalk and threw him onto the grass.  
 –Don't look at me like that, you fuck. You're my next victim.

If you meet a man in a blue Cadillac with loads of diamonds, don't talk to him.

–Crucial, you've forgotten the point. You've gone too far, you've hurt too many people.

discuss history with Monty

–We can't go back to the Era.  
 –I've been making tracks since then. I've been making time.

interminable therapy

Cassandra screaming about nuclear destruction

Jay gets to know Sondra

–He's just someone to hang out with. Nothing serious.  
 –He's a killer.  
 –That's just something that you say about someone that you don't like.  
 –That's just something that you say about yourself when you feel depressed.  
 –That's just something that you act on when you want to get back to basics.

bargain with paradise

–What do you have to give?

paralysis

remarkable person

The back porch of Restless

–They're building it out. They put more tables out there. And a fence to enclose the area.  
 –They just want you to pay if you hang out there.  
 There were too many faces to sort through.

theory of participation: The Eternal Feminine-KÉ.

–All her clones take on their life through her.  
 –Are they actual clones? Or is it a philosophy that holds them together?  
 –Or an observer who links them all together.  
 –But you have to learn her style.  
 –It's like a robin learning to fly.  
 –More like a child learning how to read.  
 –Touch the words, and they come alive.

hide beneath her hair

He thought by becoming ever more depressed, that he would avoid death but come closer to God.

–What’s behind the door?  
would induce a death-like state  
would not be in providence  
murdering his wife

your response  
tears apart respectability  
Bring jennie over  
you had all this planned  
I had visions of myself as climbing through the window

–I’m a star because I want to be.  
–You need a stage.  
–It’s Restless.  
–You need a sky.  
–It’s the Milky Way Galaxy.

Have the weapon  
kill on whim  
–You won’t even get the chance to call the cops.  
Getting the will!

Crucial was terribly undone by his own seriousness.  
That you’ll do something really stupid and get locked up for it

dominion of pain

you’ll have to do  
Newton :All is multiplication  
He thought about that for years.  
–I see what I like.  $\alpha$

Any crime becomes logical  
Jay plans to rob a divorcee.  
A friend of his.  
–What happens if he gets caught.

EF in spite of who they are

Sondra

–Just leave me alone. I want to enjoy my sadness.

–Is it yours alone.

–We could share it.

Create the feeling so that you can experience the longing

–Did you experience the shudder?

–I missed it. I miss it every time. I just get thrown back into the flurry of life.

–You can go back again.

–At the first rehearsal, all I could think about was dying. But I got over that feeling.

Kuke was playing with a lamp cord.

–Stop that!

–I'm nervous.

–This is not a good time to be nervous.

#### THE SEMINAR

KÉ discusses the feminine.

Dovsky thought that this might contradict some of Kalu's early teachings.

–It not about the act. It's about the abstention.

Something is draining my energy in here.

–I'm not angry with what you did. It's just that I have to live with the results, and you can just leave as if none of this happened.

Some of us were too devoted to the night.

What was going to happen after KÉ had gone away?

–Weren't you just standing over there?

–That was someone else.

KÉ was the EF.

–No, she was just one among the possible EF's. Don't forget the starting point, the EA.

–Dovsly already had someone else in mind before you met EA.

–I think that KÉ wants to rewrite that history.

–How is she going to do that?

–She needs to get to Kalu. Make him change what he taught Dovsly.

–He found Dovsly wandering the streets of Paris.

–That is the legend.

Kuke:

She screamed—exclamation point.

KÉ!

She assumed her pose.

–It adorned a grave site.



- The Egyptian Book of the Dead?
- They put her together according to specifications.
- She can't die.
- Everyone is following her pose.
- It's a form of worship.
- Are you sure?
- Look in their faces.
- But she was already dead. They'll never catch up.
- They are so zealous. They hope that will make up for their lack of background.
- She dived into a pool of molten flesh.
- She's going to come back as another person.

- MonoPoly wondered if you had an antidote.
- Why?
- The same old problem. Sondra kissed a boy that she didn't like. She wondered if she was going to get sick from the germs.
- Love is immunity.
- No one is allowed to love here.
- Why?
- KÉ's words. She makes the rules.

*A star is someone who gets ruthless about what she wants.*

What should we do with KÉ?

- Put her in a cave until she changes.
- What if she doesn't change?
- She'll change her hair. Get new clothes.
- No. She'll just get old and die in there.
- We'll leave it up for TV to decide.
- It would have been better if she had just written it all down, and not tried to act it out.
- It's not just an act for her. She can't write it down. She is a performer.

-How did you become a writer?

-I listened to the words. They became something real. I could touch them. I knew them.

BEYOND THE AGE OF REASON:

She does it without explanation. You can't hold her to account.

-It's in the circuits. We exist in the circuits. We have no other reality. And when the circuits shut down, we shut down.

-There's central control in Restless. It's all through the air. Mysterious waves.

-Infrared waves.

-You're living with an idea that you know is not true.

- He got too depressed and hurt himself. He said that you gave him the idea.
- I say so many things. I can't tell which things people are going to believe.
- What are you telling me?
- It's just words. I don't endorse the feelings.
- That just seems like an easy way out.
- It is. But it's enough for me.
- You're pushing this idea of a deep feeling.

-He was Crucial's older brother. He had the secret to Cruciality.

WD needed to break in.

- Crucial, it's only pleasure. It's like eating candy. You either take it or you don't.
- I feel that there's something more.
- You're not designing a body. You only feel the after effects.
- I never thought that this was a good idea.
- No one ever does. It's all physical.

In Paris there is a club with an escape route to Thomas Paine School in central Illinois.

- She's trying to get her kid out of that school
- Some punk stripper at Go Wild.

- Will you love his body after death?
- Of course, this is a religion.

Dovsky and Kalu begin another dialogue:

- You put too much preeminence in the desire.
- It still is only a representation. Like a trigger.
- Your argument is circular. The trigger of the trigger. It's about anticipation.

We all waited for KÉ to come back.

- She'll be here soon.
- The Clones are here.
- All of them.

- Didn't you get that souvenir at Niagara Falls?
- Yeah.
- You never looked inside it?
- Should I have?

Jay made his approach. He was trying to get closer to action.

- It's better if he doesn't do anything.
- He really can't be stopped. Not Jay. He has a cause.
- It has nothing to do with my philosophy of action.

–But you take pleasure from that sort of shit.

Simon was a detective. He was investigating a murder.

–There’s got to be a body.  
 –He was following EA for a while.  
 –Did he do something to her?  
 –She was the first on the list.  
 –What list?  
 –They found it at his apartment.

–How are we going to survive this.  
 –I don’t know.  
 –Too much ambrosia anesthetic.  
 –It shouldn’t hurt.  
 –It won’t. It feels sweet.  
 –I don’t want to die.

–This is the death pill.  
 –Would someone be cynical enough to think that we wanted to use the death pill?  
 –Use it. There’s no antidote for it.  
 –That’s why it’s used at the end.  
 –Save it until we go back to Restless. They don’t know about that sort of thing at Lucky’s.  
 –I thought that we were already at Lucky’s.  
 –People disappear everyday.  
 –Someone misses them.  
 –That’s why I go out at night. I want to meet people who will miss me.  
 –Does it work?  
 –I’ve got a list.

–Do they let you go to their houses?  
 –We talk on the phone. We’re not that friendly.

–Now, are you ready for the punishment.  
 –I still didn’t do anything wrong.  
 –But KÉ is really excited by what ‘s going to happen.  
 –I thought that she was beyond punishment. She’s had enough hardship in her life.  
 –She put everyone up to it. That’s just the way that she is. Nothing really happens to her

at all.

In Paris where it all happened.

–They’re going to pay just to talk to KÉ.  
 –Will it be dirty talk.

- More uplifting. Spiritual.
- I didn't think that she had anything transcendent. She just does what she feels.

- What is EF
- Eternal feminine. It means you love her in spite of how she fucks you over.
- She's really not like that.
- She seeks vengeance. It's deep.
- I thought that she didn't have any ideas.
- It's still happening to her as if it was real.

The Eternal Feminine: KÉ—the more horribly she acted, the more precious she seemed.

- It has to get worse before it gets better.
- Is that the belief that's motivating you.
- We'll all forget what happened the next day.
- Did someone slip me something in my drink?
- I don't think so.
- I feel weak.
- You'll be OK.
- No, I won't. I'm losing consciousness.
- Don't fight it. Just let it happen.
- I'm going to die.
- Close your eyes.

- Now that we have her slowed down, we can get some real answers from her.

He was a little cocky. A little too sure of himself. He could see; that the prosperity that he had gambled on was coming to fruition. He wanted his reward while things still felt so perfect.

- It's only going to get worse. I need to take what I can for now.
- It's what you deserve.
- It's my reward.

But what he got back was beyond his wildest dreams. He felt that he could own Restless even if it was beyond its outlook seemed beyond his horizon.

- Start with Lucky's. Things make more sense there.
- For him they did. Early in the night his appeals still sounded reasonable.
- I've got a great place.

-So did my parents. What you love can become your prison with four walls staring back at you.

- I've got enough that you never have to come down.

That *crazy feeling* came over him. He had been riding it for weeks now. Great weeks. Great sales weeks. He felt untouchable.

- I don't want to come down.
- He snuck into one of the back rooms of Lucky's.
- The film execs used to come in here for the VIP treatment.

She reclined on the couch. She thought to herself that she could get used to this.

–I’ve snagged some champagne.

At Restless, this feeling would hit its ceiling. Everything had to be manifest at that moment. Hunger only created more hunger. There the only currency was psychic. He needed to seal the deal before she lost her interest. He could see that she was already fading. She already suspected him. This would be enough to lose him at Restless. He had to win her while he still had chance.

Even as he pushed them both towards the stratosphere, he could feel that he was trailing down. He had her on the line. He needed to close the deal. Even if this wouldn’t give him the satisfaction that he needed, it could let him hang on a little longer.

–What do you sell?

–Commodities. Ideas.

He was thinking human commodities. He knew the value of a pound of flesh.

–I can tell what it’s worth just by touching it.

*He held the whole world in his hand. What if the world was ending as he held it? He had to sell, sell, sell. Unload all his shares.*

–I’m going to buy us some champagne.

–I’m allergic to champagne.

–Are you really?

–No, I’m just jerking your chicken.

–What?

*And he tried to grab a hold of a whisper. And his future was already his past. It was all too fleeting. He felt that he was being outguessed. But was she even selling long?*

–What have you got, sister?

There was something going on outside the door of his private room.

–You shouldn’t be in here. It’s reserved.

He didn’t even hear that. He was rolling higher than him. He put his hand on her bare skin. The tanned skin. It seemed to come alive. Outside everyone was so pale. They were saving themselves for deeper burning fires.

–Are you coming to hell with the rest of us?

The champagne spilled as he poured it. It dripped off of flesh. He wouldn’t let a drop go to waste as he caressed the back of her neck with his tongue.

–Can you taste that?

He laughed.

–I don’t want my reward in heaven. I want paradise on earth.

His aims were direct. She could feel that. She hung just by the threshold and tried to avoid his spell.

–It feels really great in here.

She watched all the other dancers.

–Just go ahead. I’ll come in later.

Was she getting away. Or was he trying to maintain his high by gambling further. Making her jealous. Turning the other girls on.

–You know what it’s about.

For a moment, he didn’t. He saw everything in negative. The whole room seemed like a parade of skeletons.

–What the fuck?

–It’s the ecstasy.

–No, it’s the steroids.

–I’m not like that—all natural. Feel these muscles.

He didn’t want her to stop. But he was losing his other girl as she slipped into the maze of dancers.

–I’m not used to this much fun.

–It’s what we were meant for.

All the references to fate were frightening.

–This is not a good time of the year to think about this sort of shit.

–You have to watch the bottom line all the time—live a little.

–I am living—too much.

–What have we learned today?

–That doesn’t sound a very manly thing to say.

–What then?

–What are we fighting for?

–What ever we didn’t get by working for it. What got taken away. Look at her.

–Did you see the look that she gave you?

–I thought that you were after a sure thing.

–It’s just around the corner.

–Where did that little cat go?

–She’s following a trail of milk.

–Powdered milk.

–For the life of me, I have to keep this going.

–It’s going to get better.

–I hope so. I really hope so.

Promise me a good time

I need to see it.

Can you see it in the body

I need to see

–I want to lick your insides like a popsicle.

*<That isn’t how we meant the popsicle to be. It a state inside the inside.>*

–I could probably do a job on your popsicle as well. *<Or outside the out.>*

From a promised inside on the outside to the outside of the inside, to the inside of the inside. This means that it's going up and it's not going to come down.

- It'll never come down.
- Almost never.
- This is super.
- This is how a whisper becomes a scream.
- Or a memory becomes real.

*Nothing could bring back that summer when they passed around banana popsicles, and KÉ roamed the dance floor, and we felt such a sense of hope. You could run your hand along her whisper as she invited us to the dance.*

*Nothing could bring back her hot breath on your neck as the summer heat got deep inside you. Each time you saw her your heart would race, but the oppressive humidity stopped you in your tracks and made it impossible to keep up. She vanished just as you reached her side.*

- Don't count your chickens before they hatch.
- What's that supposed to mean?
- There's going to be a time change soon.

- Where are we?
- We're still at Lucky's. You must be really fucked up if you don't know where you are.
- I know where I am. I just forgot the name of the place.
- That's good. I thought that you were almost dead.
- It was sore before. Now it just tickles. I think that I'm going to get worse.
- I think that you're going to laugh yourself to death.
- You're just being too emotional about this,
- I'm not the one who giggles when she has sex.
- Oh yeah!

Lucky was where you made a transaction. Restless was where you did the pickup.

- I heard you sing. I really like your voice.
- Thanks.

- It sends chills up and down my spine.
- Give me your hand.
- Where are you taking me?
- To the bathroom...to do drugs.
- I don't take drugs.
- Either do I. This is not a habit. It's an occasion.

- Ange really looks better than KÉ.
- It's just an illusion of the night. Lucky's does that.

- So if KÉ was here, she'd look better.
- There's a limit how good that you can look. It has something to do with the light.
- And Eternity.
- The Eternal Feminine.
- Like I'll love you forever.
- The high wears off.
- Just stuff some coke up your pussy.
- Rocky tried that. She died a slow death.
- She's still around.
- No one knows the difference.

If no one knows, what does she know?

- This was around the time that we started the VC.
- There is no beginning and no end to the ERA. We have existed since the beginning of time.
- Did you hear that Glen got arrested?
- Why?
- He had a bathtub full of human blood.
- That was another Glen.
- I heard it was RIP. He killed a girl in a ritual sacrifice.
- Why did he even have the ritual.
- I love slowing down at accident sites to see the corpses. All the gruesome shit.
- You're sick. You're a murderer.
- It's just the shock of watching.
- That give way to the shock of doing. I just don't have the will.
- That's what Cascade K is for.
- Buffalo Lonnie and Johnny the Hustler. They're a different breed of folk.
- Isn't Blaise giving head on the street.
- He's got to make some money.
- We all do. That's the wrinkle in time.

Dovsky was studying the progression of desire.

- Who are you looking at?
- That woman over there.
- What are you doing?
- I'm trying to see her will.
- Trying to will her over here.
- If that's what I wanted, I'd just get up and say something.

- They just stuff all the freaks in there. Guys who are too ugly to get other guys.
- You can always buy a different audience.
- Or a different look. A look on the look.



- I feel like a freak among the freaks.
- That's why Nate's on acid
- He's a gay VC with more artistic vision.
- Sounds like Immanuel.
- Nate's not from around here. He's part of the other side.
- Didn't Theresa hang around in there gang.
- She flipped out.
- She told me about some guy that she picked up. He gave her coke. And she did him a bunch. He had a small dick, and he was pudgy.
- A little pig.
- Come, come, little piggy.
- Come, come, little pudgy.*

Jenny schemed with the divorcees to entrap men.

- You can't entrap someone who has no money.
  - Or who has no mommy.
  - This was too easy.
  - Like taking candy from a baby.
  - Tell me how you did it.
  
  - I'm a success.
  - Did you get her yet?
  - She wants to go to Restless.
  - That's not a good sign. It's Halloween night. It's going to close late here.
  - How late is late?
  - It used to be 3:00AM. It's going to be 4:00AM. It's really three, but it feels like four.
- They've changed the time.
- It's Lucky's Law!
  - I don't want to get stuck here with no drugs and no girl.
  - What you don't get done here, you can finish at Restless.
  - Closing is for losers. Live off the rush.
  - We're fucking losers. We need to close. Use all the drugs you have and get her to go back to your place.
  - Get a fucking blow job in the bathroom. Take your money, and we'll get more drugs at Restless.
  - Who are you guys? Who let you into Restless?
  - Everybody comes here. I used to like dick. Now I like pussy. I've got more money. I get the higher-priced girls. Otherwise, I'll take a guy. I'm just like you only the opposite. I know how to spend my money.
  - You still don't get the whole night thing.
  - We've got enough drugs that we can keep this night thing going forever.
  - It's not about mysticism. It's about drugs. What got the Cube going in the first place. It was people discovering ecstasy for the first time. Now everybody's doing it.

–Sometimes in history, you have to go back to the beginning and start over. A new society. A clean state.

–Or just leave Sodom and head for Gomorrah.

–I just say bugger all.

–Bugger off and this becomes a brawl.

–You don't have the numbers.

–I've got the owners.

–Or so it seems.

–It is like that.

–Betrayal in the bathroom.

–This is too much for the Clones to remember.

Where was Ange anyway.

–It is Halloween?

–We're celebrating it now.

–Prudence stole my earrings and headed off to Lucky's. Betsy, I want you to find her for me.

–She needs money for drugs. She's still hanging out with Infra.

–Infra is a little fuck. Make her pay!

–Move in with me, and the house will be perfect.

*There will always be a KÉ at Restless.*

–After a while, they all find a guy and just leave here. They get rescued.

–They all come back like little lost puppies.

–Not if they make enough in the deal.

–Can you pay her price.

–She wants to be comfortable. She wants to have running water. And a little concern.

–Movies on Saturday.

–And good moves the rest of the week.

–There's not much time.

–It's not much of a step.

–How much money can you make?

–I'm not a waitress.

–I know that.

–About three hundred a night.

–I just have to get naked and dance. That's easy. Look at me right now. It's my Halloween costume. I wouldn't have worn a bra if I could have got away with it.

–I liked the riding crop.

–You need to keep a guy in his place.

–Hey, hey.

–I just take off my panties and I get three hundred dollars.

- It’s more than that. You have to look sexy when you dance.
- Like this, sugar.
- No. More gyrating of the hips. You’ve seen strippers dance. It looks like they’re having sex.
- Or swimming against a terrible current. You don’t have sex with customers.
- They offer us money. But they’re all these old guys. Scummy.
- What if the club guys started going to the clubs.
- I’ve asked them to go. They’d feel embarrassed.
- I know a guy who could use a job. I hear that they need a parking lot attendant at one of the clubs.
- They need all kinds of things. Bartenders, security. It’s a growth industry in Atlanta.
- It has something to do with the law. Seeing pussy and drinking alcohol.
- They both laughed.
- It beats baby-sitting.
  
- It’s going to be OK. It’s going to be OK.
  
- Girl, come in here and dance for me.
- You dance for me.
- Girls looks so much better than guys when they dance.
- Leave me alone.
- I’ll buy you a drink. Hang around with me, and I’ll make you feel better.
- I can make myself feel better on my own.
- I can make you feel lucky.
  
- It’s the Madonna thing. Girls have the right to act out their sexual fantasies in public. Everyone’s a star. There’s no boundaries. No privacy. You just have to flaunt it to get power. The more that you can show, the closer that you can get to the center.
- There is no center. And the dominatrix thing started before Madonna. She just sold a fad to the suburbs.
- Now it’s all around us. You can’t tell where the Little Five girls stop and the Dunwoody girls start. It’s one big blur.
- The prep school girls hold their heads more erect.
  
- Rita was dancing with one of her girls. Genevieve swirled on the floor.
- They play great music here.
- I love the second dance floor. It nothing like Restless.
- At least Restless is always there.
- It’s still a treat.
- See that girl over there.
- She had torn up clothes. But her make up was immaculate.
- What about the one with the leopard-print head band.
- The blonde.

–Yeah, that’s her.

–This is pure desire. I just aim and shoot.

–She’s blowing you kisses.

–I wish! It’s the punk guy behind me.

–I just want to be recognized for who I am.

–A big nobody!

–But getting bigger nevertheless.

–The lights are so much brighter here.

–Restless is a fucking dive!

–It’s still our Restless.

–KÉ is back there.

–The house has all these trap doors. She better not go back there.

–Sh’s an adult.

–A really fucked-up adult.

–How much did you pay to get in?

–I got in free. It’s like a lottery every time.

–I hear that there was a line to get in.

–We don’t wait in the line—never!

Gloria led around her entourage. She moved back and forth between the two clubs. A girl in a long dress twirled over and over again—Lola. She watched her reflection in the full-length mirror. Fashion was in style.

–I love it here?

–Everyone does. They can watch themselves being watched.

–All this dance floor. And chairs all around.

–Have you been downstairs?

–That’s the disco. The music is more mysterious up here.

–See that one tall girl.

–There’s the one punky girl in lingerie.

–I love her hose.

–She’s wearing a garter belt.

–Not much else.

–It’s not a sexual thing. Just a freedom thing.

–What’s the difference?

–Plenty. It would make more of a difference at Restless.

–That’s because of the gay thing.

–Here they’ll try anything. Girls on girls. Roll-aways. You know it all.

–That one girl looks all of twelve.

–She’s at least eighteen.

–She looks like a child-porn star.

–Don’t even say that.

- Someone is going to get in real trouble here.
- If the ID says twenty-one, she's twenty-one.
- Tell that to a judge.
- What can he say?
- It's not the law. It's community standards.
- Look around. There are no standards here.
- Isn't that Lana.
- I'm not sure. There are so many faces here tonight.

The floor opened up for this coordinated dance. The leader girl was in a motorcycle hat. They were all in lingerie.

- This is fucking insane.

The leader moved to the front of the group, bent down and just flipped her head. Her hair just sailed behind her.

- How did she keep the hat on.
- It's on snugly.
- KÉ needs to see this.

The Halloween dance. Fifteen girls in all. They danced forward and halted. They put their hands out to say stop. Then come on boy. To the left. Then retreat. The aggressive quality of the dance was enticing.

- I never want this to stop!
- This is the ultimate.

We bounced up and down between the two floor. Just when we thought it was time to go, we realized that we had another hour.

- Is that Connie?
- I think that she works here.
- Wow! The Imperial Set goes downtown.
- She'll give KÉ a run for her money.
- The money had gone and run away.

Show a little, show a lot. It's a show!

Keep pushing the mask!

- It's the KÉ mask.
- It's what you wrap around a whisper.
- Or a promise.
- You just want to see her face.
- She made it up, and it's going to crack.
- Don't let the hammer near the face.
- I need a drink.
- It's way past midnight. Is it taking effect.

–You need more than an effect.  
 –I’m not a waitress. I know money.  
 –You’ve spent enough.  
 –Bric and Brac. It’s their doing.

–Isn’t that Dory?  
 –No, it’s Tess.  
 –Theresa?  
 –I can’t tell. Great hair.  
 –I’m not looking at the hair.  
 –I want to see the face.  
 –I want to move together.  
 –Get on the dance floor.  
 –It’s Doria.  
 –Dory?  
 –KÉ isn’t here.  
 –She doesn’t come around.  
 –If she did...  
 –There’s too many levels, too much pose space. She’d drown.

Rearrange the story by telling you what you’re supposed to do.

–What do you mean *supposed to*? That I have to do it or that you can make me do it.

THE FOLD

But that’ll be OK!

Playing the camera game...*camera anima*

*dans un tiroir*

I saw Syd...knew that she was still in there... Syd's car  
 having taken so much away from

–Kuke, I don’t understand. Sometimes you are so fantastic; other times you are so stupid!

Why?

–You said one thing and I said another. We only share the same words!

Go to sleep for a long time. I’m going away.

I want rock n’!, roll money and I want people to .worship me at LUCKY’S!

She won't try anything here...There’s too many people.

–That's exactly why she'll try.

–Are you working now?

–Yes

–Do you need something to get you through this?

someone destroys you favorite piece... and that's it...everyone hates you  
 with a red drop in it...substance: it has its effects, works in record time ~

Gets hit–rushes to Kuke –Blood, only minor

Sometimes when you're out, you see what has to be done: we have needs  
don't lose cool by doing it that way.

–He has to protect himself–his economic base. If he disturbed the base, he would lose his  
power.

He took a card, and wrote his name on the back.

Sitting here...waiting to die.

–We'll try to get you in.

–I loved dancing with you.

–It wouldn't make you feel guilty.

–It wouldn't make me feel anything.

–Maybe if we hang around him, he'll give you something.

The attack (on the road) breaks back...the scream.

–I've spent all this time building up my reputation. I don't want to waste it on you.

–Someone is chasing me.

This was a prepared conversation with all the responses planned out.

*/ Her sexuality galaxified into a thin strip–the infinite in the self. /*

When Restless first opened, it wrestled to hold on the crowd from the Cube. But it had trouble maintaining a distinctive identity. With the after hours license, the club had the patrons of the other venues suddenly dumped at its door. It worked to craft something from these orphans. RIP, Infra, Gloria, Anastasia, and the Kamikazes all vied for the spotlight among the denizens of the nether world. But the return of KÉ seemed to focus the direction of the club. Even with her return, Infra still commanded a key position. He symbolized a more melancholic direction of Atlanta nightlife. Prudence drifted from the burgeoning scene of Lucky's to immerse herself in Infra's school of decadence.

Prudence's migration was the key event in the narrative. She both encouraged and became the prime witness in Infra's push into his twilight existence. It was brilliant but totally damned gesture on his part. He couldn't go further without risking more damage to the body. He was not equipped with the techniques of transcendence. When he crashed, an immense vacuum was left.

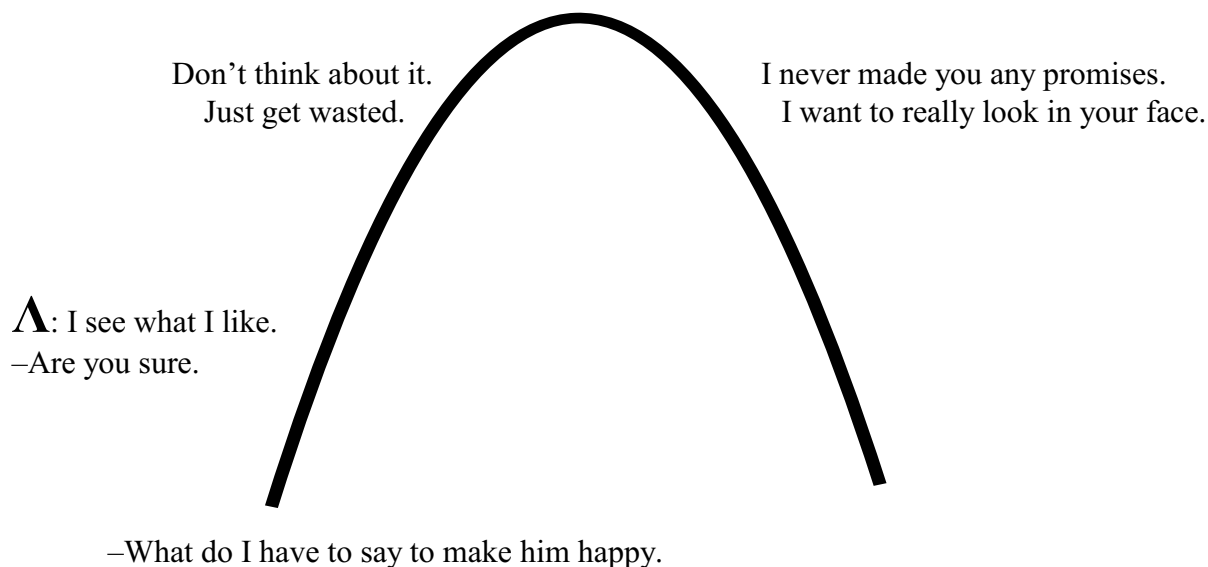
KÉ naturally capitalized on the desire of the other players to be part of something. So Lucky's indirectly played into her renaissance. At its apex, everyone took their cue from her. They copied her down to the least gesture. The automatic response to this affair was to introduce the clones.

#### **THE NARRATIVE ORDER:**

- **LUCKY'S AND PRUDENCE**
- **INFRA'S DEMISE**
- **KÉ'S ASCENDENCE**
- **HER IMITATORS**

• **THE CLONES**

The emergence of the Clones confirmed the role of Restless. This was only temporary. KÉ was able to unseat her rivals. But Infra had already hoped to restore the seat of power to Restless. He had inverted the migration from Restless to Lucky's. But his demise would return the significance of Lcuky's. Since KÉ's power was based primarily on the evidence offered by her imitators, their performance was entirely derivative and not inherent to Restless. It had already been mediated by drug use ( $\epsilon$ ). It made the Clones seem just as potent as KÉ. So the Clones invited the return to Lucky's. They were KÉ's missionaries, but things were already to far gone. They could only act as spies.



cancelled	time past: I don't want to talk about the past!
	since cancelled/melancholic open up old wounds

I work. I need to pay for things myself ( $\lambda$ ). Sometimes it's hard!  
(RETAIL, SERVICE (HAIR), RESTAURANT, HOTEL)  
gas station clerk





WORK signs of impending doom

WORK HARDER

### PROSPERITY

–I'm just trying to make the best of things.

–Lucky's!

–Did they put you on the payroll.

–Spend enough time with me, and you'll learn to like me.

–Times are getting better.

–It's something that I deal with all the time. Guys just give me that look.

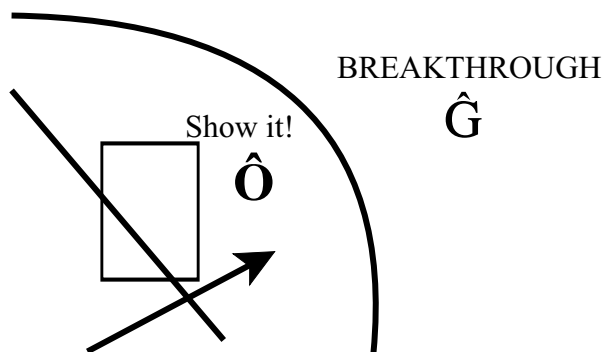
–What did you do about it?

–I felt that it had to be taken advantage of.

–I need a cocktail. (**U**)

–It's not even noon yet.

–It's got to be afternoon somewhere.



. **U**

You can't get past that point.

–You look like a stripper.

–I'm a dancer.

–When someone's moving inside of you, there doesn't seem to be much of a difference.

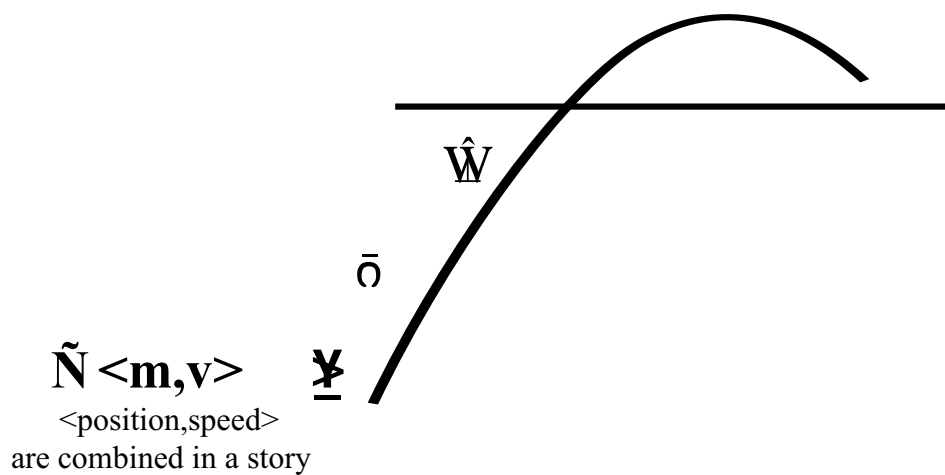
–That's got to be special.

–What?

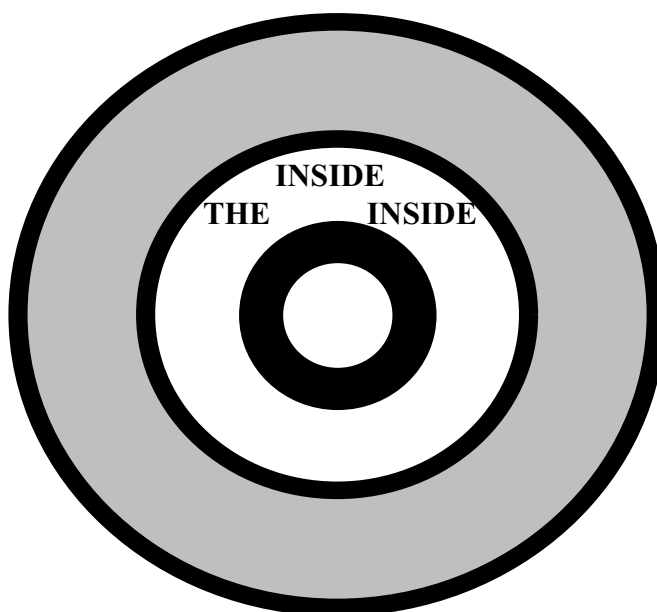
- Someone with real promise.
- Is that why you keep coming back to this dump?
- It's more like fate.
- I don't believe in fate. It's not the stars, it's our lives that make us what we are.
- We are our lives. We live among start. We have to make it what it is.
- More stripper trash.
- We're the audience.
- We're not watching them. We're dancing with them.
- They're getting paid.
- For now.

## SHOW IT! Ô

It will last for nights and nights!



## THE OUTSIDE



How can you contain the desire to get on the inside. Deeper inside only takes the lover on the outside so he can experience a more intense inside. From this comes the narrative, experiences that stimulate a more intense inside.

TO KEEP IT GOING :  $\Lambda$  [ By sharing]

You need a toke of this extreme. It is burned in the body. It is the visual reminder of the physical feeling. Can you touch me there/ I can't stop.

**Music**                      **Notation**                      **Dance**

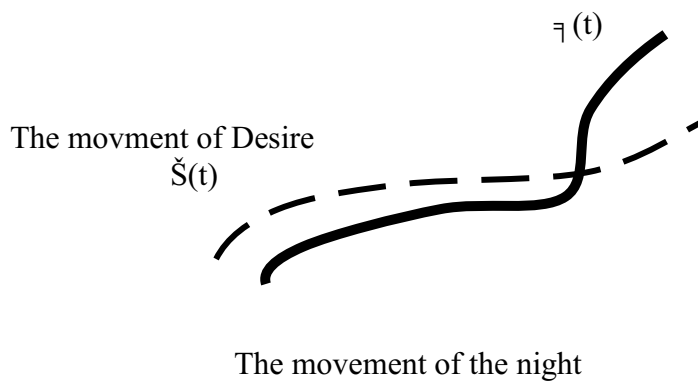
$$\mu'(t) = \text{Notation} = \int_a^b \theta(t) dt$$

Dance sketches out the form of music. It is an articulated notation.

Dance works to include the body of the other (  $\Phi(t)$  ) in a mimicking of sexual (  $\check{S}(t)$  ) satisfaction.

$$\Phi(t) \check{S}(t) \theta_{[e]}(t) dt$$

A move that attracts  $\theta(t) = \sum_{i=1}^n \underline{\neq} i(t)$



•木• Intensity, shared.

The intensity of the body articulated (  $Q_i$  ) overwhelms the desire of the self articulated (  $P_i$  ).

$$\sum_{i=1}^n Q_i > \sum_{i=1}^n P_i$$

**The Core of Self**



**The IMAGE**

**IM**

**PROJECTION**

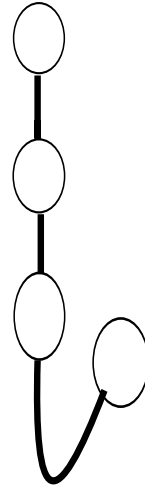
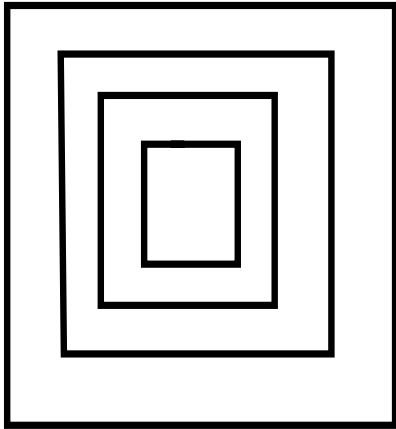
**α**

Restless encourages the participants to go through a process of coming into the SELF. They project an image that exceeds any determination by reputation.

There is this enormous endeavor to craft a personality that suits the projected image. For those who have not undergone the initiation by the mask, everything seems so *AUTOMATIC!* It is almost a mystical ritual.

In place of the ritual is the devotion to the other. This exorbitant creature that haunts the night. The EA: Thea. Courtney. Is all the effort to pay her tribute worth it. What is at the core! A series of connections.

## EXORBITANT



## CONNECTION

By going outside, you are going inside.

### THE MASK

The form:

I had seen her at Lucky's. Just a shadow. She was concentrated on looking at me. Every time that I turned, I seemed to miss her.

–You can see her reflection in the mirror.

I moved to catch a glimpse of the face. I was too late. She noticed that I was following her. She ran downstairs. She slipped through the door before I could catch up with her.

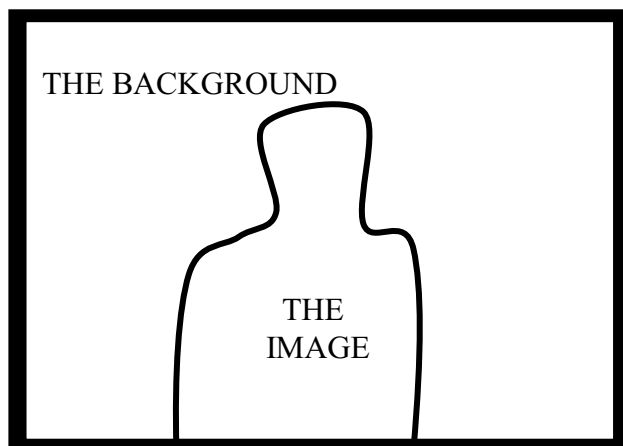
She was waiting for me at Restless. I thought that I would be able to confront her. She had the mask to separate herself from me.

–Look at me. I want to see your face.

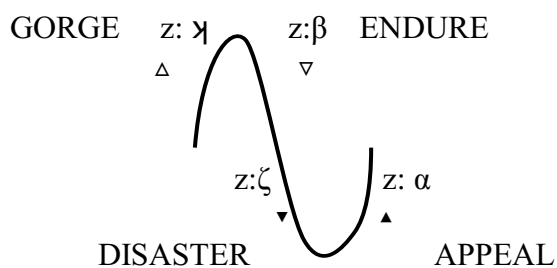
–This is the face of your night. What you are afraid of.

It was hideous.

### CANVAS( REPRESENTATION) VIEWING



ALL VIEWINGS (THE FLASH) THE OBJECT ILLUMINATED



write our past  
rewrite it for you

the construct  
she will give in to the in beyond the in

MY BODY SAYS SOMETHING DIFFERENT

INDEPENDENCE at this moment  
she is completely independent  
no one is thinking about her  
she is not with anyone  
INTERSECTION  
NECESSITY

how are you different  
you won't penetrate as deep  
not going to make it hurt  
what if I like that  
you won't give me what I like  
not going to make me bleed

what follows  
is the same protracted experience

the image  
stay image  
distort the body

image  
divorced biology  
can't control the body

it's appealing  
someone  
intellectual  
sustain questions ....

Get what they want  
doesn't work

exorbitance

figure it out in one night  
nostalgia

the gasp of introduction  
so grateful to be recognized  
the notation  
could write it  
what you won't give to the night

she was collapsed in the middle of the floor  
all wrapped up in a ball

I'm so high  
I need something to go to the next level

I'm so high that the body can't contain it  
I'm going to lose it