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Soliloquy

- Christopher R. Moore, Editor

I climbed to the top of a mountain this past weekend. I do not believe it was a named peak, at least certainly not in the order of Shasta or Washington or “Sawtooth”. Why was it not deemed important or substantial or popular enough to be christened in the fashion of its nearest neighbors? It did, after all, have a U.S. Coast and Geologic Survey marker atop the highest boulder, a dull bronze jewel celebrating man’s partial domination of the upward direction. This piece of foreign metal proclaimed that *we have been here*, we can walk up high mountains with hammers and bits of cement and then do trigonometric calculations. The date on the bronze read “1928”. Had the forest explorers lost interest in this peak? just one of thousands of others, giving a panorama of an equivalent 360 degrees to that of any other peak? Or was it perhaps that since mountains don’t move all that much, since they tend to stay out of the rat race, a new marker was superfluous? I could not, to the chagrin of my cartographic side, match the queer serial number (43N58TF-W?) on the marker to the strange notation on my topographic map in order to check my theory. Maybe this peak wasn’t on the map?—the squiggly lines representing altitude changes seemed to swirl about in my approximate vicinity, but weren’t they parallel there, not round-ish? The shades of green turned to brown, to white as the two-dimensions stretched out of the paper to emulate the deific Third. A paper tear between one particular representation of ridgeline may have been the root of some of the difficulties. Mercator sure had it easy back then – only half the world to deal with, or approximately that.

Up top, on a small, craggy plateau of about ten feet square, I sat, in the exact center. The center, for me, after putting away my maps and confusion, was the spot equidistantly distant from the edges. The edges, save for the one by which I made my semi-daring ascent, were in the persuadingly vertical alignment. I came to realize that one small stumble would be my last small stumble – an awfully large stumble would follow

immediately after, then... The curious thing, though, was that the mountain had no interest in bucking me to the ground below, nor did the rocks, nor did my legs. What would? I think to fall would have been a conscious decision; perhaps not a desired one, but I believe that definite choices would have been involved. Gravity is stubborn, but does not breach its limits; sentience must be applied to provoke its eternal pull.

In the very center, I felt safe. I could get the view of my surroundings I desired, but in the somewhat conservative, non-cutting-edge perspective with which I felt comfortable. In the middle, I could address some of the higher instincts, contemplation, reflection, circumlocution. But not too quickly. Delaying an inevitable (?) understanding of my new environs, I first addressed my hunger in the culinary facet of my life. I fixed up some tacos from morocco (a name coined by a fond friend of mine) – pita bread, tabouli, feta cheese. While being stung by a honey bee, I ate.

Enough beating around the bush, I thought. Time to get on with some enlightenment. Why did I hike miles and miles to the top of a silly mountain?—to eat bulgar wheat?—to discover the key to the measurement of longitude?—to place an artificial designation on a huge pile of rocks? No. I came to come to a greater understanding of Earth, and its Purpose and Reason for Being, and to find my place in It, with all appropriate Relativities and Necessities and Contingencies. I now transcribe what I wrote, in all proper notebook convolution:

“...The collective sound, the collective sight, the collective feeling, all the composite dynamism of our human-sized world, thrown into a static, permanent being. All is perfectly still, quiet, calm. But tingling with not unnaturally-present restraint.”

“I am at the top; I can feel the whole of the Earth pushing up through me, I am the focal point. The variegated meanings and values and qualities of the world coalesce into the Tip, into an unstateable One Understanding. I am at that tip; yet, my piece of the entire sum is miniscule, and I am hardly a visitor to this peak. I do not understand this One Understanding, I do not feel the streams of Life flowing through me,

filling me with their juices of Knowledge. It is all gratifying, and humbling, simultaneously.”

“All is very simple here – perhaps I am just numbed, by the extravagancies, to the extravagancies, but perhaps not – the subtle nuances affected by acquaintances and cars and cities have evaporated.”

“I see other trails, wiggling throughout the forests and mountains, each leading to their own peak. How are there more than one? How can superlatives have plurals? Why do people want to visit the tops of mountains if they might fall, or might not *know*? What is the difference between the person and the mountain?”

I thought also about lakes (neat), and living permanently on top (chilly during winter, not much arable land). Bugs started moving in, hoping, I presume, to partake in a taste of the balmy islands of the Mediterranean. Two other humans bounded up the granite boulders (boulders I had crawled up, with both hands, wishing for an ice pick) as if they were playing hop-scotch in an aeroplane. They spoke of fishing, and interstate highways, and expensive hydration systems. Jumping about on the top-most rock, they did not fall off. Soon they left.

I soon left as well. I was happy with the mountain, and with myself. I was glad I got to the top, perhaps not ecstatic, but it was well worth it. I would do it again, for sure.

On my way down, I thought about those trails. I thought of a cliché – how each person takes their own trail, some different, many the same, and how those who do not take a trail have three choices – to forge their own, to get lost, or to stand still. I wasn’t quite sure where I applied (nor thought much more about it after tripping over a root), but thought it was an interesting cliché.

I did not draw any conclusions. It would have been nice, I think, but unnecessary... what if I had? Where would I now be? Would it pique my interest to peak again? Discovery...

I now (230’ above sea-level) blame all my confusion on the absurdly thin oxygen at such an extreme elevation.

(untitled)

- David H. Sutherland

This poem starts slow, slow like a barge rifting wake or
a starfish meta-sizing under a noonday sun.

It has no syllabus of change or schedule,
slow to itself as its thinker thinks;

if I desire the grossest of metaphors, as a poet, first
let me devour this strange mirror of words for a body,

the long cadenced cheeks and fleshy hips half chiseled
half scrawled. Teased by pen let the letter find its nape

write its torso of chilling seconds and edits. If not of the Will,
then there is no difficulty in what there is to be.

Let the prodigious state of page or analogy worth revising
turn its figurations, its powerful sentence even firmer to its call.

Give it breath, but only twice in a minute, keep its
constant surrendering to a constant din of experience intact,

for by divine right no wish of my own can be absolved
in a passage whose unnatural thoughts are these hauntings,

so before I cradle myself off to sleep, there'll be this poem,
this slow sounding poem, that ends with a whine.

Horse Latitudes

David H. Sutherland

There is thunder in your eyes, ground strokes and steppers
That eddy-up under boorish clouds in a regatta of sparks,

Torrents beneath thickened swells that strafe along walls
Of incontinent depths. But in the deader calm between

Parallels content on delivering salvation's edge, end of earth
To another . . . go no further, leave these souls that anchor

Their rituals to myth, raise their sails to a greater pilot and
Return us face down and silent to these waters made flesh.

Daily we drift nearer, wrung out of idle and dreaming
Under a sun whose miniature of life stirs in the calm float.

Our schedules and cares destined for a new world's promise now
Forfeit to a sea's fin de siècle, hump oil and smug belongings

While the hoof of these latitudes bares down to remind us
That we drag its oar with conviction.

Standing at the Edge of Land

- Gary C. Campbell

Standing at the Edge of Land

Standing at the edge of land.

Staring up I seem to see, I seem to realize,
That the stars are still restricting themselves
Somehow from our view.

I search for an answer, and there I see.
Only in America would someone find a way to build
Further out than the earth of Mother Nature.
The industrial lighting oranges the sky.
Having its own control over nature herself.

I Can Actually See the Milky Way

I can actually see the Milky Way.

I can actually see the Umbrella God.

I can actually see the Big Dipper!

Isn't it amazing how much you can see ?

Away from the mass producers of unnatural light.

I sit in a hole, surrounded by stinging sand winds and a constant ocean
howl.

Just writing, waiting for that shooting star.

checklist for a scavenger hunt

- aberham hall earth

- a hangnail
- tricks
- an angry man because a dog is urinating on him
- explosives (no dynamite please)
- imported lunch meat
- a non-domestic feline
- four gallons
- crescent
- crescent wrench
- posse
- a picture of yourself two seconds ago
- super vhs
- john grisham
- a fascist lesbian skinhead dictator
- sixty bucks

if you find all these items in 42 hours, I will stimulate your corona or g-spot respectively

A Poem About a Man at a Table Writing a Poem of Love

- aberham hall earth

my pen(cil) expels or it pours
new world love
on my passive paper-
(etc., etc.)
it makes me feel (possibly better)
-in a way in which
good cannot describe, nor in
a way which i can describe-(nor do i really want to describe to you=ass)
(aren't i pitiful or.....shitty?)

it sure is dandy that i am god
it sure is dandy that i love god

this is my table to write on.
i didn't build it,
but so what?
sitting at the table indirectly writing a poem of love
(not);
.....unlove;
is what is being done

i wish i wasn't lazy
i sure could use some decent posture
i never had a hamstring

well, it is not
too obvious that emotions cannot be ignored
someone please hit
me over the head with a

large
wooden board.
please?

Really,
i'm just the man
at the table writing a poem of love
do not mind me though,
as you see
i'm really trying
to not concentrate on
you...

DESCENT

- John Birkbeck

Clouds pull
themselves thin
I peer through them
smooth out the map
on my knees
rumpled
fields below
tumblings quiltings
greens tans blues
earth tilting
a cathedral spire
pokes upward
ancestors buried there
horizon
slopes again
to angle opposite
stomach drops
feels the sinking
altitude
descending to
my map

Lock-Smith

- Christopher R. Moore

He has locked his keys in his car, *modus transportatae*.

Where's my 24-hour, 7-days a week Life Assistance, APA?

What? Guardian angel schmangel.

Angelic tow-truck... please... please... pull me out of the rut!

He wanted to grab just a quick cuppa joe, then

I've planned a bit o' rendez-vousing...

But his keys are locked in his car

I guess I'll take some more coffee. Where's the telephone booth?

A quarter. Money = Time.

Look at my watch... Why's my hand still ticking? I'm supposed to be *somewhere*

But his keys, they're locked in the car.

Someone's waiting for me

He thought he would be punctual

But I can't get there. She's still waiting for me.

A concrete/brick wall seems to have sprung up mischievously like a eucalyptus tree. Hm.

Hold on, let me go wave down my Saviour. He shall come, then I shall go.

...

What are you doing?

Nothing much. Just writing, you know.

Oh. Am I interrupting your writing?

Nah, you sure aren't.

Good. Please, write. Please, write. I once had ideals, dreams like you.

I'm not sure if I want to be a writer, though I do like to write.

I wanted to be a doctor. I wanted to help people.

Do you have patience?

No, I suppose not. I did then, but then... not enough. Now I'm a
Watchmaker.
Oh yes? I own a watch!
I see. I probably didn't make it, though.
Probably not. It's swiss.
...
His keys are locked in the car
Where is my savior? I must go *from here*.
Hm.
Whatcha writin' about, friend?
About you, I think.
Why don't you write about my keys?
Perhaps I shall. Are they lonely?
No... they have my eyeglasses – to keep them company.
I see.
Yes... I like company... I was supposed to have company this
evening.
That's the problem, leaving your keys locked in your car.
It sure is. But, I guess I get to be written about... and more coffee.
Plus, you get to see my watch.
That's true. Oh! Wait! Oh! There's—
Liberation of his keys... and now I once again
Sit alone, pencil in hand,
My car across the street,
My keys in my pocket

Death Chair

- Anjana Basu

DEATH CHAIR

This chair was an electric one.
It scorched.
People cutting through the pack
burnt their fingers on its legs.
At the end of a long corridor
crowded with screams,
the chair waited.
It was bad with its legs in the air:
the sign of a multitude of axes.
It was worse with its feet on the ground.
Most chairs are secure and deep
They don't answer when you call them
They support you quietly, bridging troubled waters
Most chairs don't have names, just parts of your body
easy, arm, swivel, Swede
comfortable countries, three feet in the air
Legs on the ground.
This one was different
This one was a hunter
The Death Chair - symbol of a violent chase
ending in electricity
shockingly sudden, the final resting place.
A chair is going to change your life for the worse
Most chairs are secure places
with narrow cushioned seats
Most chairs aren't lost in the dark.

RED

Men who slash their wrists go there,

looking for skyscraper blades
and sharp edged skies.
You think you're red, Red,
when you're really blue;
you think you know it all.
Between the bits of my words
and the spit of my paragraphs.
They all went there,
wrists wrapped in white satin.
I remember red, Red,
not just sunsets:
gashed skies, traffic lights.
We all went along
with a razor and a tune.
We cut our wrists into little bits
and tied them up with grass.
The spring was a pink balloon
and it burst over East River.
But Red's seen it all yesterday night
and he wants more.
The Statue of Liberty kicked up her skirts
and her knickers dropped.
Red's seen it all yesterday night
and he wants more.
Here's a razor, Red, with an edge of glass.
Goodnight. Come back when the grass
grows out of your wrists,
looking for more.

METAPHOR

A sonata of insanity
face carefully folded in white
paper sleeves
blank eyes trailing the ghost of

a goose feather
across acres of discarded reasons
tied in hair.

GHOSTS

Winter and the bitter fogs
Late morning sun. The year
On the brink of age and death -
A decade since the blossoming of a life.
Eyes like water bloomed to stars
On a summer night among the faces.
Things happen among faces
That are hidden in corners,
Darkened public rooms:
Haven may be found in darkened public rooms.
Walk through winter carrying a letter,
Footsteps light over falling leaves,
Yellow, dusty winter leaves,
To be caught for wishes
Yellow in the late, yellow sun
Devouring the fish fog.
Follow a flash of blue in the smoke
The tail of a shawl.
Illusion, that's all, in the end.
The moonlight silvers everything.
Colours grow the same
Cold and ghostly in a winter glass.
Shadows reach out, fall thick
Around the warmth of a bed.
Colour dies and motions change.
What flashed blue in the fog,
What figure ran by ?
The grey parting for a chink of sun
And the shimmer of water in the air

Flash of water and sun
The seasons run, fast skimming feet
Past the leaves.
Nothing returns.
One warms ones hands cupped at the sun,
Eats an orange in the sun
Lips hard against the pulp.
Sun glances down the quiet lane
Over the red buildings.
Footsteps patter past the leaves
Ahead, a flash of blue, then dimness.
The years flash in a moment in the sun,
Through the dust wind and the faces.
You cup an orange to warm your hands,
Draw the shawl close.
Lost letters and fallen leaves fly past
Ten years of dust.
Coming from childhood to age,
The incompleteness of a life.
The eye seeks blue in the shimmering air
Through the smoke and dust,
The glimmering mist that spirals
Dusty gold in the wind,
Torn apart in the wind,
To a vision turned tree.
Ghosts cry at the end
Of sunny winter streets
And one never meets them again.

NEWS IN BLOOD

Patterns on black and white newsprint
You slash a line and the blood wells through
Afghanistan, Los Angeles, Sarajevo
Black and white and red all over

THAT DAMN COFFEE

- Emma Klingbeil

"The distance aches for me," he said, drowning in his coffee. His fat fingers tried to coil themselves around the white ceramic cup, but they only managed to stick out harshly on the sides. This act made him seem like he was actually trying to prove something to the drink.

I had known Scott for a couple weeks now. Even though I had never told him that I cared for his company (or acted like it for that matter), we had been together constantly. I'm also positive that he didn't care for mine. That's the way the cookie crumbles though.

He went on and on about having loved a mermaid once, but that he couldn't bear her having to part with her sea. So, he left her. He told me that she pleaded and prayed, even groveled at his stubby feet for him to stay. Her emerald tail pounding on the sand.

"No, no my dear..." he'd say, "I must go..."

"I'll DIE without you my love!" she'd yell, "PLEASE! I BEG of you! Don't say goodbye to me, we can fall asleep on the shore!"

"If it's meant to be, our hearts will meet again. Farewell," –and he'd leave, walking on the white sand, while she sat on her rock, arms outstretched. She killed herself the next day. (Death of a broken heart he claimed.)

But that GODDAMN coffee! It just sat there under his lying chin, sitting blackly and sophisticated. It did seem to be the perfect drink for him.

OH! But the mermaid was singing now, he said. Singing, "I wonder if someday you'll say you love me!" (He actually sang the words. His talk thick and disgusting from his fatty voice box.)

"Creamer, sir?" a short, hollow waitress asked. One that looks forward to ripping her husband's heart out every night. A husband of forty years that prays for the bliss of death, or a never-ending coma. Where did that twinkle in her eye go? "No." he'd say. "I like it black."

"—like my men," I thought. Then I let out a good hearty laugh at that.

Chemically Imbalanced

- Emma Klingbeil

Every morning, on my way to drowning, I would pass a man. This man is an old man, and he's missing a few bits and pieces. Every morning he sits on his window sill (which is actually a red wig).

"I built this with my own two fingers," he'd rage. I stood across the street with my breakfast on my shoes, every day. I was getting closer and closer to obsession with this man. He sat on his "window sill", completely motionless for ten seconds. (Of course I timed him.) On the eleventh second on the eighth hour of the day, he snapped his grungy mouth wide open. After his dusty saliva started to roll out from the crack of his mouth, he began to form silent words with his lips. First, the words were slow, but of course, they became faster and faster. His face would get contorted and angry as he waved his thick brown tongue back and forth. (It was QUITE disgusting, for it was coated in a sheet of grey mucus.) He would suddenly stop, and quickly began to laugh to himself, enjoying it immensely. (A quite audible "hehehe".) The laughter soon faded, and that old man went back to his tongue-work. I, as usual, would then take my presence elsewhere. Today, though, I had become so intrigued by this man, I decided to speak a few words with him. I crossed the street (on the fading crosswalk to be exact), and stopped in front of him. I didn't even have to utter one word before he said to me,

"You know, I'm chemically imbalanced."

Not to Waste Breath

- W. James Steck II

You can speak in no other fashion, other than artfully.

If you are considering a graduation from silence –

To grace the wind with words and deny the blessing of uninterrupted
deep breathing—

You should first recognize every consonant you utter to be pure
and to resonate out into always.

Eternal is every parted lip that may accept the wind
and transfer it
into music of the individual

We are all instruments in the grand symphony of the world.

We should remember that as real and
significant as we are,

We need play in accordance with all others,
From worm to walnut to bear to tree to human
being, lest we get out of key...

And our welcome in
the orchestra retire.

Do not forget in your speaking to sing, always sing.

Live in poetry.

Always Remember.

If you do you will never tire,

Nor need food nor drink nor sleep nor speak.

Your understanding and wishes will flow from you into all
others

direct, with no need for harsh translation.

If you remember, the world shall be a play for you to direct,
A wind for you to lift yourself higher and higher.
If you happen to forget, then your world may appear out of
your control.

You will tire and argue, smiles faded, you'll retire
before you've begun.

You will have forgotten that you have a remote control to instantly
change every aspect of your environment and mood just at the push of a
button...

Just fell between the cushions.

Always Remember.

Staggered Logs /2

- W. James Steck II

Well, here we are. A lifetime up to this present spat up in a few fleeting words that in some perverse, unholy way attempt to illustrate what has become of what I see in the mirror every day. I don't know why it is that I have this nature to feel the need to express and impose on you these visions of the places that I've come to know through my dreams and experiences, but I figure that it's just my function. Tough break, being in the process of trying to complete yourself, while searching for the elusive meaning of life, all because you've been told that you've not already found it. Extremely confused and growing weary of all the damned avenues of philosophy and of language barriers all together. Tired of hearing myself talk about inexpressible sensations and trying to capture the feelings in words. Good, bad, selfish, love, hate, existence, eternal, I, God, sanity, insanity, society, reality, death, birth, life: to hell with it all. I've eaten the words served to me and restructured them in an attempt to paint my own internal picture outwardly for the world to see and perceive... I've done this for my own inner discovery so that one day I might finally feel like I've done enough and accept rest. But I see now that there is no escape.

I tell you that I love you and this place that we are in because I have never before been on a mountain this high, and as we look at each other – there on the level that we've created, I, resorting back to foolishness, have attempted to label and articulate the feeling and have shattered the whole thing. I tell you that these are my beliefs, that you don't feel that I am trying to pronounce my word as the almighty word of God, but the truth is, is that this *is* God. Nothing more can ever exist, other than these ever-evolving eyes through which we decide to look at this truth of our being here right now. Aah! I can't go on. Here I am... existence on display and what do I say? I'm talking and talking and..... why can't I just rest?

* * *

Tonight it'll come. It can't be stopped. I have chosen to get on this rollercoaster and I have been carried to the top and it's begun. In come the voices and the visitors and the molecular breakdowns, in comes the cursed introspection and the tiresome format. I close my eyes and the light bleeds in from the corners. It seems as if some headlights have just shown in my eyes, or a light has come on, so I open my eyes and there is nothing. Still night sky. But don't look too deep, or else I may lose control and leave for good. It's not time to travel yet, it's not time. So I close my eyes again and it seems as if a star has exploded. I flinch my eyes open and once again – nothing – nothing but breeze that seems to whisper to me to let go, let go and enjoy the ride. Giggling for a reason unspeakable I close my eyes and play with the lights that appear and dance before me in the darkness. Pigmented retinal distortion? Something in my eye causing this perhaps? NO, all attempts to analyze the cause brings me no explanation. I feel like I should be afraid but I'm not whatsoever as I relax into the light show that swallows and swallows and swallows... with morning sun bringing me back to yet another dream here and now.

They exist. They are us. Technology is our nature, our nature that will carry us into space, into micro-villages where we garden and doctor and reproduce and explore and expand and thrive. We are on the way now. Those that have reached such areas are there, in the sky. Look closely and they will come. Send out the signal and they will arrive, slowly but surely. They are you and I, although their bodies have changed with their new surroundings. No hair, skinnier physiques, expanded perception and psychic ability. Eyes that open from all corners of the head. It is you and I. They like milkshakes and X-rays and you full attention, so listen up.

* * *

Lying under the night sky, clutching the sleeping bag tightly to capture the body warmth generated between me and my companion's closeness I stare upward. We are the kids in the pouch of a kangaroo (our Earth), who, bouncing through her environment (the infinite universe), carries us lovingly along. We are learning to balance on a circus ball and coming to know more clearly day after day the vivid reality that many others may perceive to be insanity.

* * *

Learn to unfold.

Paint your picture for me and I shall paint mine for you and we shall visit each other's world.

Hopping discs of time and matter, let this time carry us into completion, so that we may become bored with our perfection and dissect ourselves again – just for the fun of it.

We'll pretend to forget that we are God, you and I, and everything else, and that heaven is what we create for ourselves, just as is hell.

* * *

As children we dream of the perfect house, the perfect partner, the perfect job, the perfect life, the perfect heaven. Tossed into the world we find that which we do not want: pain, lacking, fear, regret, shit, remorse, "bad" things. Now we think we have failed, but it is actually the bricks of these discoveries of things not we believe do not fit into our heaven that allow us to build the walls of our perfection. Trust me, I'm the insane one with the vision. So rejoice in your tragedy for you will never escape the loop and the deeper you dive the higher you'll be flung up into the cold and bright air, out of the womb, into the sexual completion, into the trip, into the death and the present.

The Tragedy of Lucifer

- John Mumm

The Fall of the Angels has definitely taken its place as one of the most familiar stories of Christianity. According to tradition, Lucifer, most beautiful of all the angels, decided within his heart that he deserved to be 'like God' and thus committed the ultimate sin. For this, he was banished from Heaven to darkness and eternal suffering in the Pits of Hell. This essay will attempt to analyze the stages of Lucifer's 'Fall', from the moment he first rejects his Creator to the eternal chains in which he is eventually cast, and will present this essential question: Was Lucifer really the evil Prince of Darkness that he is so often painted as, or was he actually the greatest Hero of all Western literature?

I. The Luciferian Ideal

In order that we might properly address the rebellion of Lucifer, we must first understand his position beforehand and the ideal which led to his fatal action. It is said that Lucifer was the most beautiful of all the angels and indeed of all creation. He was second, in fact, only to the Almighty God, his Creator. It is important to realize that this does not imply that he rivaled his God. Actually, the distance between them was eternal. God was his Creator, and by his Nature, he was totally dependent on his God. Thus, it was impossible that any angel might exist without God.

From this it followed that the angel's purpose for existence was to serve and praise its Eternal Master. If one were to walk those halls of the Ancient Heaven, he would most likely see the phrase 'God is King' etched into the golden pillars of the Holy City. This, indeed, was the only principle which existed. The angels loved God, however, for he granted them eternal happiness in exchange for their praise, their service, and their submission. One can imagine a young Lucifer joining in the choir of

angels as they sang the praises of the Almighty. What else could live within the heart of the greatest creature of all than eternal gratitude to his Creator?

At one point, however, a change occurred within the pure heart of a loyal Lucifer. His realization would be the most profound ever experienced and would eventually damn him to eternal suffering. It was thus that he reasoned (and we must here accept that angels, too, were blessed with reason and free will): "God has created all that is for one sole purpose: to serve and to worship Him. Thus by its very Nature, any creature is actually cast in the chains of eternal slavery. God assured that His creatures would be totally dependent on Him, and that they could never exist without Him or be his equal. Why is it that I can not be free? Is it just that I am created a slave and forever chained to my imperfect Nature? Why", Lucifer asked, "can I not be like God?" This thought alone was enough. An angel could not question the Will of God, and when he did, he was cast out of Heaven forever. God banished Lucifer from the Holy City, along with those angels who has shared his thoughts, and Hell was created.

The rebellion of Lucifer can be interpreted in two ways. Either it was an act of destructive and selfish Pride, as is the Christian teaching, or it was rather an act of affirmation in the name of all creation against an oppressive God and an oppressive Reality. It is the latter which we will examine.

Lucifer knew where his rebellion would take him. He realized full well that submission was the only path to eternal reward. However, he could not shake this question from his heart: "Is it better to live as a slave in Heaven, or free in Hell?" His protest began as a concern for his own fate, but ended as a universal protest in the name of an oppressed creation. It was his conviction that Reality under God was intrinsically unjust. Any creature, by virtue of its own existence, did not deserve eternal slavery. According to Lucifer, only if every creature could become 'like God' would justice exist. However, Lucifer proposed an ideal that could never be achieved. It was not possible that any creature could be like God, but

this is what he demanded without condition. His protest was a negation, and furthermore a negation of Reality and of all existence.

Thus, the Luciferian ideal was born: "It IS better to be free in Hell than a slave in Heaven." Reality and its God is unjust and must be rejected. Not to reject God would be to accept injustice and even to affirm it. Lucifer argued that this was to betray all of creation. His negation of God, however, ended in a new affirmation, that of a creature with its own intrinsic value, an idea that could not truly exist in a Reality defined by an Absolute Master and his enslaved creation. Thus, the creature for the first time, was said to be independently important.

It might appear that this rebellion was futile, as it did nothing to alter an unchanging Reality, but Lucifer would have disagreed. "My Nature is forever enslaved to God, but I have created an ideal that transcends that Nature. Therefore, my conviction alone shall defeat God, for in it creation is as great as the Almighty. God can enslave my being, but my Will is subject only to my own ideal, an ideal that brings me to the level of the Almighty Himself."

Only now have the grounds been laid to refute that long-held belief that Lucifer's rebellion was one of selfish Pride. When the situation is examined closely, it is immediately apparent that Lucifer is actually a martyr for an ideal affirming all creation. The only difference between him and the Christian martyr is that the Christian can expect an eternal spiritual reward after his temporal death. Lucifer, however, can only await his own eternal suffering. The Christian is, after all, a spiritual egoist, acting always with Heaven in mind, but Lucifer's sacrifice is totally selfless, giving up his eternal happiness for his noble ideal and the creation it affirms.

Now the first fateful action has been taken: the creation of an ideal simultaneously negating Reality and its God and affirming creation. However, this is not the end. We shall now move into a Reality totally unlike its predecessor, for now the Undeniable has been denied, even if in thought alone, and from perfect (but unjust) order springs chaos and a new being, Man.

II. Rebellion

Any rebellion cannot stop at its ideal if it is to be considered a true rebellion. Though the conviction of Lucifer alone was enough to exile him from the City of God, it made no direct assault on those holy walls. No, Lucifer knew that the ideal alone was not enough and he now had an eternity to carry out his rebellion. If the Luciferian ideal was beyond the realm of possibility, then the rebel needed to find a plan that could be carried out. Thus, he reserved himself to a plan within God's Reality: to turn creation against its Immortal Creator. If all of creation chose as he had to worship the ideal that in essence deified itself, then the Reality of Injustice would be totally denied. By its Nature, creation must serve God, but it could choose to be free if it was willing to sacrifice its own being. In essence, Luciferism advocated spiritual suicide, on the grounds that spiritual existence was unacceptable. Spiritual suicide, unfortunately, did not spell nonexistence, but rather eternal torment, the torment of a being separated from its very self, but this was a sacrifice Lucifer and his angels were willing to make. It wasn't until the appearance of a new creature that this plan could be fulfilled, however, as the angels who remained in Heaven would never turn away, a fact that Lucifer totally understood. By its Nature, when an angel makes a choice, it can never change its mind. Any action it takes remains for eternity: the 'good' angels confined to Heaven and Lucifer confined to freedom forever.

The creature Lucifer awaited was soon to appear in the Garden of Eden. The Man of Eden could hardly be described as physical man. He was granted a free will, but was deprived of Reason. Reason, instead, was placed at the center of his Garden and forbidden him by God. "From that tree you shall not eat; the moment you eat from it you are surely doomed to die." (Genesis, 2:17) Thus, we see a creature perfectly suited to Lucifer's needs. Locked in this Garden, he was commanded to remain the ignorant slave of an Eternal Master while the Fruit of Knowledge hung just within his reach. From Lucifer's perspective, what crueler trick could be played on any being? So the rebel described as the evil Serpent of the

Garden in reality acted out of compassion and respect for this pitiful creature. It too, in Lucifer's mind, deserved to be like God.

Lucifer revealed to Eve the truth he had discovered at such a price. "The moment you eat of it you will be like gods." (Genesis, 3:4) This, to the religious, was surely an act of great deceit as man could never be like God, but perhaps Lucifer viewed the situation in a different light. He knew that with Reason they too could embrace an ideal that would surpass their own Nature, as he had done, and in this way they *could* be like gods. Eve probably did not fully understand the consequences that her actions would bring, and so betrayed the command of God and ate of the fruit, Adam following her lead. In doing so, she bought Reason at the price of eternity and man was cast into the physical world, dominated by death, decay, and entropy. An abandoned man now became the bewildered and blinded creature he would remain. His transformation presented to Lucifer a new task, for physical man differed greatly from the angels. Man's decisions were far from eternal. Instead, he was free to change his mind at any time and naturally fluctuated between obedience and rebellion. Man would become the battleground on which Lucifer's war would be waged.

Now that Lucifer had presented man with his ideal, he was confronted with a new question: "What should be the moral system of a creation dedicated to an ideal deifying itself?" When Lucifer first rejected God and created his ideal, the answer was simple: Any good act is an act for the good of creation and any evil act is an act of submission to the unjust God. Affirmation of creation took precedence over the negation of Reality, which was seen as just a logical starting-point. Positive action was key, and Lucifer had carried this out in leading the fallen angels and in teaching man of the truth he had found. However, we shall now examine the final dimension of Lucifer's rebellion, that of his eternally fatal error, and how it turned from almost pure affirmation to total negation.

III. The Seeds of Darkness

Lucifer's argument had been simple. Creation was condemned to eternal slavery. In essence, the Nature of creation is slavery to God. Thus, Reality as God created it was intrinsically unjust. Convinced that freedom in Hell is better than slavery in Heaven, Lucifer resolved that he must negate Reality by creating an ideal that transcended his own Nature. This ideal was that creation necessarily *should* be like God. To accept it was to negate Reality and God philosophically, which was equal to spiritual suicide. Negation in this case was the necessary side-effect of a noble affirmation. The course of action of this rebellion? Unite creation against its Creator and reject His unjust commandments. Freedom is the new god created by the Luciferian ideal. Hell would follow, that much was assured, but creation could not, on principle, deny itself and its own value. Thus, it *must* deny Reality.

There was a flaw in Lucifer's reasoning, however, and one that could never be reconciled. For though Lucifer chose to reject his Nature, preferring his ideal, he could not actually negate it. Instead, he merely ignored it. Now we have already established that any action an angel takes is eternal as this is the Nature of angels (that is why Lucifer can never be redeemed after his Fall, but man can, according to Christianity, be forgiven up until his temporal death). It can be inferred that any tendency of an angel, then, would be fulfilled to its limits the eternity of the angel's existence (just as a ball that even slightly tended to roll one way would over an infinite amount of time move to its very limits in that direction). It is the negation of Reality that is the tendency of Lucifer in question. Though at first it was used only as a necessary starting-point for the total affirmation of creation, the impossibility of the Luciferian ideal eventually leads the rebellion into a state of desperation. The idea of raising creation to God's level is impossible and thus creation can never be truly affirmed, so the negation of God and Reality slowly becomes more and more appealing. This negation is the Seed of Darkness within Lucifer's heart which will bloom only in the most desperate of conditions. Unfortunately, these conditions are perfectly supplied by Hell, his eternal prison.

We now see a Lucifer who has existed in Hell for a span of time beyond human comprehension. Having been totally immersed in the fact that God cannot be overthrown (for we imagine the young Lucifer always hoping that it was somehow possible), he now is filled with only two emotions, Revenge and Hatred. This change is only to be expected. Eternity in Hell combined with the realization that God could not be defeated inspires in Lucifer a new conviction. "It is because of God that I am in such torment and so I must destroy everything that he deems holy!"

The creator of the Luciferian ideal, the sacrificial affirmer of creation, becomes a being defined by his hatred of God and Reality, and inevitably decides that he must become the destroyer of creation. This is the irrational decision of a tortured, disillusioned soul, once the most beautiful of all creation, now the most despised. If Reality is intrinsically unjust then it must not only be rejected, but destroyed, and, as God is invincible, the other face of Reality, creation, must become the target. Man, logically, will become both the instrument and the victim of this destruction.

IV. The Fall of the Angels, The Fall of Man

It is thus that the new rebellion is carried out on Earth. Negation and destruction replace the original Luciferism founded on affirmation. The spiritual suicide of Lucifer is now the physical suicide of man, for if he is to become the instrument of negation, he must destroy creation and thus, ultimately, he must destroy himself. Eve was a Luciferian rebel, but Cain is merely evil. He kills for his own sake, and in his frenzy of destruction forgets the Luciferian ideal. Physical man was created because of the idea that creation should be like God, but he only remembers that *he*, individually, should be like God. Lucifer is deformed into Satan, a creature of pure Hatred, and man follows him through the transformation. Satanism, sacrificing Eternity for the pleasure of the moment, replaces Luciferism, sacrificing Eternity for the most noble of ideals.

Destruction for the sake of destruction, negation for the sake of negation: the Luciferian ideal is forgotten even by its creator. Man is in

essence a means without an end regarding Lucifer's rebellion. The ideal has forgotten affirmation in the presence of total justification, but such is the nature of ideals and rebellion, ideals turned into action. The problem rests in the notion that believing in an ideal that surpasses one's Nature, one transcends his own Nature. Of course, that Nature remains in reality and it is the ideal that is forgotten. Acting according to his Nature (as beings must), the rebel believes falsely that he is acting for the ideal. The futility of such a struggle leads to desperate measures, to total justification in the name of a forgotten ideal. And so we leave Lucifer in chains in his eternal Hell, having forgotten the reasons for his tortured existence. The question remains unanswered, though, as to whether he is villain or hero. In ideal he was truly more noble than any creature and he had made the ultimate sacrifice for that ideal. However, his error was to attempt to transcend his own Nature, and the consequence is that he has become Hatred, the darkest of angels and the greatest destroyer in all creation.

"How have you fallen from the heavens,
O Morning Star, son of the dawn!"
(Isaiah, 14:12)