

An excerpt from

Source Invisible

By
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Prufrockian Screwtape

There is a muffled delirium in sun-strangled air,
where gnats are lazy particles of chaos refracting
god-rays that paint everything in glistening, golden hue.
Nothing is not shimmering, hazy and yet perfectly rendered.

Now the light is getting in and it feels like the water,
only quiet and pleasant — this should be frightening.
Something has slipped, and it's all very okay;
yes, yes, reasonably mild, this drowning.

Look, how the colors unassumingly vibrate the eyes
so that all the attractive people resonate together,
and you still shuffling along like you always do,
one foot, then two. One foot, then two.

And how is it that you keep on? It's not resolution,
just an ignorant daze that compels each step forward.
The placeless warm & fuzzies are hardly nightmarish
— though equally devastating in effect, equally garish.

Prufrock and Screwtape both knew what you didn't,
that nothing destroys you, nothing elicits the spiral
of nothing downward to the will-o-wisp haunt of regret,
is the song of the maids of the sea, the longing

catastrophic. And you, quite the fool,
thought the empty fall was the narrow path up,
that you were patient, you were waiting with purpose

This shore is a common thing

on many days—the grass, the jagged boulders & rocks, the undulous waves, the marina across the bay, the brick buildings downtown, the towering newspaper sign that declares itself 'HERALD', the suburban neighborhoods cross-fading into the hills, the hills themselves lined with trees stretched out all the way to the mountains (that's Mount Baker in the distance)—all this is usually one place, clear and crisp under the blue hole in our sky, clouds ringing this small pocket of the world.

Today, here, the fog curls and wraps around my feet, and the grass itself is nothing more than a suggestion of earth, presently in the act of vanishing into monochromatic oblivion; a lone seagull cries out once as it shadows by, and it wisps into the gray. The whole world becomes a nearly blank page, the line of the sea and shore ink-black, God's pen stroke.

The Night

The full dark settles in.
Zephyr wind graces the night
emptying the world of itself,
emptied.

*Half-built suburbia, reposed
for the late hour, wightly glows
in streetlamp-orange glimmer.
Unlike for the Geats, no grendeling
wrath rises from foul fen.
Although, underneath—*

*vibrations, in this human place
human void, ghost like missing trains
on the tracks: the empty, torn
suggestion of a name (air that tells—
here was light, fire, and well);
uncanny and fey,*

*these wooden house-bones are exposed,
these homes have not been given souls
yet—this kingdom unborn still,
Heorot unraised, no songs are sung—
all the spirits wild run
through this space unmade.*

•

It is the night.
Something quiet pulls
my soul to otherwhere,
else.

*I must not exist. This is vital. It is late.
I will not exist as long as I'm in motion.
I will not have to exist as long as I am in motion.
I will be okay as long as I keep walking.
I am okay. I am walking. Keep walking.*

*As long as I've been walking I have been okay.
I have been okay before, I can be okay.
I keep and am, have been, walking.*

•

And in the night I always stumble
upon a labyrinth forgotten
in the darkened city,
the place where there should be others
that becomes something nearly monstrous
for the memory, whose animosity
is its own emptiness, emptying,
emptied into the night.

*snow is falling now,
has always been falling here,
falls here because I'm walking;
the empty streets are now more hostile
to the act, but the walking must be done—
it is very late and empty*

•

Ice black as asphalt is the night
is electric chill the night, the stoplights
are watchers in the white, are the night
as halos are, their starburst glare the eyes
of night, the night is lamps in the barren
streets, abandoned city block; moonrise
is the night and there are shadows
when the county is made silver; night is
a whisper in the trees, a shuffling
of deerhooves through frosted grass—
the night is manna; the night is chittering
behind the fenceline and glints yellow
as raccoons eyes; night is the mystic wind chime,
omnipresent silence that isn't silent is the night,
is every creaking stair and snapping twig,
is a flickering porchlight that reveals
the silhouette of night outside my door,
is also moths and spiders and something
more—these are the night and nothing
less; the night is every iridescent phantom
behind shut eyelids, the night is open
is once more into the night is the fire
amidst the fog is the night is a red and dying
sun is a sleet upon the bay is a runestone

in a golden hay field is a door at the end
of a long hallway is a wave of ichor is
an arm that strangles me is a beam
through my window is the dawn
is the night is a klaxon is the night
is aurora borealis is the night is
acrid, ashen smoke is the night
is the force that propels
from street to street
and I am walking
in the night
is the night
is

Chainsaw

Rip and tear
the tired old rings
rooted & thunks
the iron on bead;
 mulch & gravel,
 switchback & bore,
 oil & rabble
 revel in the grind;
pavement; nettle;
briar's on the mend;
 thorns & blood,
 denim ripped to stitches,
 leather workgloves burnt & frayed;
sawdust; mildew; lichen; frost;
rot & termites; ratking corpse;
 whetstone; file; fungus; sap;
 splinters; cable; chains & smoke;
wretched beating dull & fleet,
the hacking rend and wounded meet
in rancor freeze & bite with fangs;
 dew and filth,
 spade & axe;
engine's rusted, buckled knees,
the workings press—

I cut my teeth.