Bleary eyes that make his vision swim. His body is humming like his blood has turned to acid and the only thing he can seem to do is hold this cigarette between his lips. Smoke billows in front of his face, in front of his bleary vision and he frowns at the white room that is filled with executives and business men as they talk about nothing that makes sense to him; their voices spill into his ears like the scream of a broken amp. None of it sounds right. His lips tighten around his fag, ash tumbles off it and onto his lap. Since when is music about sitting in an office early on a Monday. He thought pursing a career in music was about avoiding all this bollocks. No, he is sat in an uncomfortable chair in a room that stinks of stale coffee, where the carpet blends into the walls, where his heart pumps with sickness and his eyes near fall closed as he longs for his bed. But if his head was on his pillow he would be wide awake again, thinking about music that he can't seem to write. At least not anymore. "Mr Albarn." His head bolts upright, he had fallen asleep. "Are we boring you?" The faceless, boring man asks. Damon's eyes dart to an empty seat in the corner, where he thought he saw someone sitting. "No," Damon starts groggily, blinking heavily as he tries to straighten himself; his spine groans. "Mm, no not at all, please continue."

The days drone on, one melts into the other without Damon so much as realizing. His weeks become as blurred as childhood memories except instead of that wonderful, childish pleasure he gets from trying to think about them they have this murky, drunken quality that stains them. He says things without realizing, offends people and watches their face twist into hurt and defense. He can't even bring himself to apologize. He has a million conversations, all mixed like drinks into one another, with drinks and drugs and cigarettes smoked with aristocrats or on the pavement out the back of the studio. And the studio is too big, too big for Blur. He wants to make good music, he wants to get up on stage and shock people. But the walls of the studio are so white and tall and unremarkable, he can't stop comparing the band to it. He feels dizzy when he steps into the cold, echoing room that is filled with talking people who he doesn't know, not really. What happened to practicing in his bedroom, one shoulder holding the phone against his ear and the other jotting down lyrics on a notepad. Now he has to escape out the heavy back door and smoke away from everyone else; with his eyes trained on the moss that creeps out of the cracks in the wall as he thinks about the days gone by and what a miserable bastard he has become. Too much drinking, too much yelling. He is coiled like a spring and when he loses his mind at someone they seem to fail to understand that he is really just furious at how pathetic he has become, he can see the reflection of his tired face in their eyes and he becomes so disgusted he feels like he cannot breathe. He is fighting himself, talking to himself, he is everywhere. Damon is behind walls and under hats and in his shadow, stinking of misery and failure. Each step of his that rings along the pavement mirrors back this mantra that deprecates himself. With hair pulling madness, he stares at the crack in the wall and smokes his cigarette, feeling full of hatred and regret.

The studio. This large, high walled and white studio that makes everything echo with privilege. His body is beginning to beg him to sit down as his knees start to wobble when he sings too loud into the microphone. His mind is blaring distractions of nothing and his vision has gotten blurrier; he hasn't had so much as an hour of sleep in over a week. He can't eat anything, he can't sing properly, his eyes have sunk into his head. He looks like a dolled up famine child. "It's not right." He groans at the band. "You're not playing it right" He doesn't notice how loud he is speaking. Everyone stares blankly at him. Ten or fifteen blurred faces

without any interest in making real music. “They’re not listening.” Something grunts in his mind. “Are you listening to me? It’s not right!” He stops short, feeling weak from yelling. He just needs some water. He leans into this woman who is sitting in the corner, her face is glassy, Damon hardly recognizes her though he remembers shaking her hand. “Can I get some water, please.” He mumbles, sounding like he is about to die. She says something and stands up, his vision begins to fade; go a little white. His body takes on a tremendous tremble and it moves on its own back towards the microphone. These little black flies start to swarm his vision; first the corners and then everything goes black and his body goes numb. He hears a crash and a gasp of his name. His head hits the floor and he stares at the black behind his eyes. “Damon, what’s wrong?” “‘M-” He moans, too weak to speak. “‘M fine.” His vision clears enough for him to gaze up at the circle of people above him. The band members, staff, himself. He blinks. There he is, Damon. But older. Shaved head, miserable looking. His body runs cold as the duplicate grins at him. “Bad fall?” He asks, staring down at the wounded Damon. “He’s in shock.” Someone says. “No-” Damon mumbles, snapping his attention to the woman with the water. “I’m all good.” when he gets pulled to his feet the duplicate is gone.

He passes a video shop that sells televisions and he catches his face in them. Him and Graham sitting on a sofa looking happy and tired but in an endearing way: These boys work hard. He stares through the glass at himself, his static face through the screen. He stares so wide and so long that his eyes begin to burn. He looks so happy. What happened. What’s killing him, its like a parasite has latched itself onto his life and has begun to eat away at everything that he used to love. Someone bumps against his shoulder as they pass him, it knocks him out of his trance. He goes home, that face plastered behind his eyelids. That young face, happy and carefree and drugged. It contrasts to the man that he dreams about. The Damon he sees when he is stressed, the older one that leers and sneers in his ear about how he isn’t doing any good. When he gets home he drinks himself into a coma. He lays on his bed and stares at the older man that stands at the foot of it like a ghost. He can’t speak. The two just stare. “You wanna feel good.” The other drones. “I know its eating you up inside.” “Mhm.” He drunkenly agrees. “You want me to touch you, hm?” Damon looks up at him, he has gotten closer. He stands next to him now. Damon brings his hand onto himself and begins to rub himself through his jeans. “It’s been so long” He groans. He wakes up with a jolt, totally unsure when he fell asleep. At some point he fell asleep. Fully and completely, for nearly a day. He feels horribly hungover, it is dark outside. He can see the artificial street light humming behind his curtain. His mouth his dry, his head is pounding. He feels ill and dizzy and his body is covered in a thin film of sweat. “How’re you meant to write when you look like that?” Damon looks around his room. He flinches. There, in the corner, his duplicate. The ghost. The memory comes back to him slowly. Him touching himself to climax while his hallucination guided him through it. He feels gross. Damon swallows. “What are you?” Damon asks, shifting onto his elbow. “I’m you.” The duplicate responds, irritated at the question’s ignorance. Damon screws his eyes shut and opens them again. It is still there. “I’m going insane.” Damon mumbles, a tremor running through him. He moves onto the side of the bed. “No you’re not.” “You’re a fucking hallucination!” Damon rasps, moving onto his feet and stumbling into the bathroom. He feels disgusting, he needs to clean himself, wash his mouth out with soap and rip off his skin. “A- a product of my mind.” He rambles. He turns on the tap and splashes water onto his face. He looks into the mirror and flinches. “Your album is shit.” Damon frowns, feeling defensive even though he knows the duplicate is right. “No its not.” “Yes it is.” Damon spins around furiously, so fast that he gags. “Whats your

problem?” He demands, his hands clutch the porcelain sink behind him. The sneers at Damon. “I think you’re obnoxious.” He spits. “Well I think you’re not real.” Damon’s body begins to yell at him, his head is aching still, his heart stings, his muscles are weakened. He is going to faint again. Though, through his delirium, he feels restlessly angry and terribly irritated. Completely furious at himself, at this projection of what he is becoming. The two stare, the duplicate looks full of disdain; his older face is frowning. The moment is frozen, dead still. Then a Cheshire grin spreads across the duplicate’s face. “I think you’re a failure.” He says. Damon’s anger rises out of him, out of his blunt and useless body, he swings at the duplicate. He never was one for fighting. His fist connects with his ear, bone hits bone with a thud and the duplicate stumbles back into the shower door. He cries out and curses. Damon stares down at his stinging hand, feeling the pain from the hit rise up his arm, wondering how his fist connected with anything at all. He is torn from his trance when the duplicate hits him, hard in his forehead. Damon spits at the contact, he loses his footing for a moment before steadying himself and going in for another hit. He feels electric and elated as his fist makes an impact. Blood bursts from beneath the duplicate’s skin. He groans as his head is flung to the side. Damon stops and stares at the blossoming blood. It spills down the older man’s cheek. In his stagnation he is hit again and again. Pain and blood swells from his face. The two become like animals, grunting and hitting, ignoring the horrible pain. The two fall to the ground, pulled and interlocked with blood wetting their skin and mixing between them as they writhe along the dirty tiles. “You’re pathetic!” The other Damon yells, furious. He throws another punch. “All you want to do is make good music-“ He spits into Damon’s bloody ear. “And you come out with this public pleasing bollocks!” He grits. Damon cries out as the other him grabs hold of his hair and pulls. “M-“ Damon moans, the pulling feels good. And its been so long. “You’re pathetic.” He pulls harder causing Damon’s head to tip back. He moans again. Then the duplicate kisses him, rough and bloody. Metal mixes in their mouths as blood stains his tongue. Then Damon struggles, moving on top of himself and sitting on his lap. He stares down at his own old and bloody face. He wants him. He begins to punch, hard and unforgiving as mantras of self hatred pulse through his skull. He punches until he feels like the bone of his knuckles are exposed. He feels cold tiles against his skin, it feels like a blanket against his stinging skin. Then the violence stops, so abruptly as Damon lays on the floor, inebriated and hurt. The duplicate of himself begins to laugh, rattling out this long and glorious cackle. Everything goes dark as his blood wet skin sticks to the cooling tile.

“Jesus! Damon, what happened?” Graham’s voice is rung out with concern. “Tell him you fell down some stairs.” The other Damon demands. “I fell down some stairs.” Damon mumbles, gums slicked with blood still, smiling though his face is heavily bruised it aches when he moves. Another meeting, another cold and dreary room. He sinks into the cushion seat and tries not to fall asleep.