

From Come Up to Come Down

Foreword

A brief homage to a youth spent in the thrall of illicit substances

The Climb

Frenzy. The night rages around us, energy infused and flowing. It crackles with anticipation. Music blares out with joyous abandon. Gone are the restrictions of day and the waking world. Night brings out the edge dwellers. Banished is the mundane and the expected. Here lies adventure, here be monsters. Bodies shift as they shadow the beat. Hands weave and jab, etching patterns in the soupy air like sorcerers casting incantations. Bodies bead with the sweat of our toil, the room clings to our skin. Lungs hungry for oxygen pant with their exertion. Each breath taken is a moment of ecstasy, sending shivers of pleasure singing through our souls. The mind swirls in a sea of serotonin, roiled in the waves of a lightning storm. The storm bellows and booms building its intensity as I am swept into the maelstrom. I spin, manically, out of control towards its hungry centre. The abyss. The void. It drains all colour. Someone starts to scream. Then all is calm, and the eye of the storm opens to the clarity of blue skies. An acceptance ensues as chemicals settle. My mind floats gentle on a breeze. Awareness ripples through my senses. A sense of self awakens. I drift away from the dancing creatures of the crowd, heading towards the softness of a bed. Bodies mingle in a puddling cuddle. They were many- but now are one. A burning gift is offered to me by a hand grown from that mass. I take it gratefully, filling my lungs with dusty smoke. The need to wander rises in me and I head out the trailer door. The crisp air washes over me. The stars hang in the sky above, swallowing up my vision in their speckled brilliance. Pupils pulled wide, they swallow the moon. Steam rises from my body as my breath fogs the air. Legs ache lightly and mind starts to clear. Ecstatic mayhem still rages on, leaving me behind. I find peace in reflection as night laughs by.

View from the Mountain Top

Timelines entwine. The present and the past twist into each other as they blaze down neural pathways, setting regions of my brain alight as they burn their way to revelations. *Chemical joy floods* the senses but chemicals can be depleted and when they run dry, all that remains - is a despair, a despair that is inescapable as the cause lies not in emotion but is instead a process of the body. Biology has its limits and we, as biological beings live within these limits. No matter how much we try to deny the fact, we are beings of limited potential. People hate to think that, but that's because they don't realise that within limited potential exists nigh on infinite possibilities, complexities that dazzle the mind. The brain cannot compute such

possibilities, another limit of an exceptional piece of evolution. We can only ponder the peripheries. Looking for lines of beauty in the cause and effect that spreads out across the universe. To examine one's own limitations is not an admission of weakness or surrender but a method to push oneself out to those limits. For I assure you - no one person has ever reached all of those limits that make up biology's cage. No, for to achieve that potential requires a balance and elegance that minds such as ours can hardly comprehend. We are just the human ladder standing shoulder to shoulder on the backs of those who bore us, propelled by their love and their purpose on a path we shall barely comprehend. For this universe is older than we can envision. We are but scores marking the day, in a calendar that no one's keeping track of. We are but a burst of energy spread across a canvas of stars. Marching with purpose onwards in a direction no one can agree on, for reasons we can only speculate on, in a world we call our own, with little knowledge of what that ownership implies. Fools fail to ponder for they see no point in the effort, geniuses ponder in circles only to end up in the same place as the fools. Biology is the cage we pace. Fettered in chains of a flawed a mind. Hopelessly fooling ourselves into believing in meaning that is but a shared delusion. Still if one is not to think, how will one pass those man-made seconds? For time is a construct we use to constrain the boredom that lies in all encompassing consciousness. Better to be fettered and chained we feel, then to face the

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fear of the unknown and the fury of the infinite. We are surrounded by a belief we all share. That this all has a purpose, even the Nihilists cling to the idea, for without purpose there is no action and with no action there is no am.

The Descent

Winter claws outside the door. Frost encroaches turning farmstead green into brilliant white. Bodies huddle close for warmth. The rising breath of our collective exhales reminds me of chimney smoke and nights by the fire. The lazy morning rises late in the day. The sun feels afar on days like today. Gone is the blanketing hug of summer sun that would hold you close and warm in its pink embrace. Turned to a tease whose beckoning light still burns bright while the fires of its passion are wilted and withheld, like a lover grown weary of sharing your bed. Sleep scatters quickly when comfort is pined for. It is not hard to leave one's dreams when surrounded by harsh elements that scratch and pick at the edges of your awareness, like crows on a corpse. We rise in tandem, two by two in quick succession. Movements are slow and certain as we thaw into wakefulness. Smokes are rolled with barely a whisper. Tobacco pouches are passed and poured into skins. Someone searches for filters. All is shared, those who can roll, roll for those who can't. We leave the trailer like a gang of ghosts. White and flowing in the morning light. Bedraggled we stand draped

in duvets squinting into the morning glare. Lighter clicks, fire sparks, lungs inhale and lighter is passed. The embers devour paper as cigarettes burn, yet its approach provides no promise of heat. Though nicotine's rush provides some relief. Smoke fills the air- we act as chimney again. We stand in silence facing the day as frost retreats and bird song reigns.
