

to where the Light takes us

After forcing down a 500-milligram dosage of medicine, a motorcyclist took himself out for a ride through the city. Stumbling down the stairs of his apartment complex, he then forced himself out the door with aggressive body slams. The sun colored the city in dots. Squares and squares of color possibly red or orange or yellow. They were like fireflies, maybe stars or the sun. It was at least as bright as the sun, shining heat and baking his skin. He felt his body getting on the motorbike and starting it. Then he felt acceleration and his head whipped and jerked back and forth as his motorbike weaved through and dodged traffic, dents, and potholes. The speed took these pastel dots of lights or stars or suns and weaved them into strings. The strings held together and congealed into a colorful tunnel that consumed the darkness between the dots. He felt his motorbike swerve and brushed things. Maybe hard things like walls and metal. They scraped against his legs, gliding razor blades dragging through his skin like butter or maybe melted sugar. It made his leg feel warm with the spilling paint, running down his legs to soak his socks like stepping into a deep puddle of rainwater, but as the wind blew it dry, it was cold, frigid pain, shooting and throbbing. It wasn't too bad, the pain at least, new blood drew and warmed up and froze again. It wasn't enough to make him stop moving, chasing, and following the neverending bright lights. But in an interval of time between soon and later the lights died away like comets shooting from the sky. Each streak of red yellow or orange grew more and more skinny until the beams starved, causing the darkness to return. The towering buildings and the noise of the city disappeared behind the cyclist. And he drove as the last colored light in the sky turned into nothing.

There was nothing to be afraid of, the medicine suffered for him.

It extinguished tormenting thoughts.

It made the air taste sweet like a confection.

It warmed him up like a cigarette on a freezing cold day.

It gave him a friend who empathized with him.

He kept another bottle of medicine in his pocket, so this fear, the lingering bite and danger that he felt crossing the dark road was something he could push deep into the abyss.

Blindness was ahead. Here. Nothing guided the cyclist like the spectral lights within the city. Darkness isolated him in a semi-circle of incandescent motor headlights. Outlines of black forest trees. Outlines of lifeless suburban homes. Rows neverending. Purple endless sky. Starless. Nothing was ahead of him or behind him. Only the golden strip in the middle of the road. It was faint. But it was the only light. His mind was muddy. And it was enough to consume him in curiosity. Instead of turning back. The cyclist followed the strip of yellow light. It drew straight through the center of the road. A piece of the sun stretched into rope. It was illuminated by the warm incandescent lights on his motorbike. Where would it take him? Rows of trees whipped by. He could feel the gusts push on his face. Heavy. The engines grew louder. It shook the ground. But the cyclist could only hear. A buzz. A soft engine whirring and vibrating. So he accelerated, following the sunstring to the end of the earth.

Medicine could fight off most things.

But not everything.

For example,

Reality.

The physical world.

In the deepest part of his brain.

He found chasing the sunstring pointless.

Reality told him that he was running away.

From mistakes of decades past.

From the biting and the tearing of his mind.

Not guided by some celestial railroad to never ending freedom.

So he pulled over by the side of a tree and reached for his last bottle of medicine.

The fluid evaporated as it touched his cracked and bleeding lips.

Reality could shut the hell up.

Somewhere in the darkness, the ground started to slope. At first, the cyclist thought of it no more as a hill, but the road only got steeper and steeper. The sunstring he followed started to reach up like a beacon, glowing yellow swallowed by the black fog, slowly illuminated and rising into a mountain. He felt his motorbike struggle, roaring and roaring trying to keep up in its ascension. It gripped onto the concrete, accelerating up, meter by meter, second by second. The cyclist felt his body lean back to the void beneath. The air felt like an oppressive weight, rejecting him as he and the motorcycle chased for the light. Was this what flight felt like? Fighting through the wind like a speeding vertical rollercoaster? His hand clenched onto the handlebars and tensed until they strained and hurt and hurt and hurt. His mind was dull. The road turned almost vertical, the cyclist was teetering over death, and losing grip meant falling and falling into a starving sea of black mass. So the only way he could go was up, chasing glowing sunstring until it reaches the ends of the earth. Struggling on just two rubber grips, the cyclist and his bike torpedoed up, chasing and chasing up into the heavens.

Ascension was more exciting than he thought.

Without fear, he was soaring through the darkness.

Riding the sunstring on a celestial road.

Reality began to melt miles in the sky.

His hurt faded as he left the world.

He wished this feeling would be,

Neverending

Out of black, the sun shoots an orange arrow through the clouds, creating light millions and trillions of times more powerful than the motorcycle ever could. It was there the cyclist saw where the sunstring ended, shooting up into the sky, reaching to meet the sun for an embrace, abruptly cut short by seas of towering clouds. But this time, the cyclist believed he could fly. Each moment gifted more and more sunlight to the world. It was a calling to ascension. To transcend reality. Maybe the sun will provide a path to the top of the world. The cyclist forced higher and higher and higher, leaving the sunstring behind to chase the sun, heaving and pushing as the wind threatened to tear his face open like paper and leave him bleeding in bone. He never noticed his hands releasing their grip on the motorcycle, sending the roaring engine down to burn in the atmosphere. He never realized the fear he was supposed to feel before he inevitably fell ten thousand meters to his death. But the cyclist was boundlessly floating, facing an ocean of clouds painted with iridescent shards gleaming from the golden-orange sun. How the skyscape swallowed the world in soft warm color, rays of concentrated yellow piercing the sky, warring with the darkness below. For a moment, the darkness was gone, and the cyclist remembered his first sunrise by the lakeside with his parents, back when reality was saturated with heavy colors. He remembered the warmth of their embrace as he watched the new world unfold. The sun cradled him in the same comforting warmth of his childhood. So he let his body relax and let the world take him through the clouds. The cyclist wished for this feeling to be neverending.

Neverending has always been a word of lies.

The deepest depths of his mind fought back.

To bring him back to reality.

So after a long struggle.

The sky started to crack.

After a short eternity, the cyclist felt the violence of the wind rip him out of the sun's grasp. The dark clouds rushed back to repair the damaged hole in the sky, and black prevailed again in the world. The cyclist was then left to fall. It was there where the medicine failed him. The warmth that it gave him was gone. The air turned bitter and cold, forcing glacial frost down his throat. The cyclist reached for another bottle that would at least help him float and recollect his thoughts and melt the frost and meet his family, but there was nothing. Nothing that would cure and let him stay alive. The abyss cut open a piece of his mind and festered in his brain like a parasite, shattering him into a million pieces. He felt his body plummet and accelerate, and soon, the frigid cold morphed into searing heat as he reentered the atmosphere. He felt the skin on his face chip flake by flake and cook in blistering heat as his vision slowly blurred into orange.

This was the man's last recollection before his body was found at the side of the road beneath a tree.

He was covered in wounds. Lacerations in the cheek and right leg. Knees bent the wrong way. Blood pooled onto the grass and into the soil.

He struggled and groaned and writhed on the ground, his mouth opening and closing, like a fish cooked alive in sizzling oil.