



TRANSITORY

The Prism

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TRANSITORY – The Prism

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For all who believe.

1.

SX267 leans like a leafless weeping willow tree. His long arms hang at his sides. The trunk of his body rises and falls with each of his miserly breaths. Wrinkled and as pale as the flesh of a hairless rodent, his face is grim with his stubbled chin tucked in. Bumpy joints protrude where his bones and muscles connect, causing his appendages to appear like disfigured branches. No singing birds build nests upon his hunched shoulders nor are there families of insects swarming at his rootless feet. He stands alone, in the dark stillness of the universe.

When will it end?

He craves to cry, but can't. While enduring his most mournful memories, the tears cluster and rest, frozen in the lower creases of his dry eyelids.

He wants to feel, but won't.

What's a human being who can't feel? However, my feelings have always betrayed me.

For what other reason would I have ended up in this place called Transitory?

During my previous lives that I can remember, I always attempted to act in accordance with my higher self, but instead fell victim to weaknesses and succumbed to the characteristics I believe regrettably make me most human. Each journey appeared to be unique, but in retrospect, I was always the same me just living through different circumstances.

In one life, his heart pounded and his fingers shook as he crept down a narrow hall. Sweat rippled, slid, and dripped into his bushy chin. The intense sounds of their love-making rattled his perception and caused him to grip the wooden staircase railing to keep his balance against what seemed to him to be vibrating walls, ceilings, and floors. Shaking and afraid, his palms couldn't

steady at the knob; therefore, William kicked in the door and snarled into their astonished faces.

Lovely and fair like two porcelain dolls, the women's naked bodies were sensually embraced. Their stench revolted *and* stimulated him. A sudden sweet ache sparked his groin. Hurriedly, he opened the nearby window and wiped sweat from his forehead with a handkerchief he fetched from his suit pocket. His opponent's slippery body proudly stood up. She boldly took a bite from a piece of fruit while they eyed each other like lions locked in a hypnotic predatory glare. Without further hesitation, he pummeled her with his fists and shoved her through the glass window. Her petite bones shattered easily from the fall. Blood from her split skull merged with the steady flow of human and horse feces that ran through the grooves of the cobblestone street.

Looking down, past the billowing curtains, he studied the softness of her face, which was lightly powdered with pink ovals on her cheeks. Her lips were parted, painted coral and paralyzed in the shape of the last shrill they released. A small brown mouse gnawed at the barely eaten purple plum left imprisoned inside her clenched, right palm. Turning around, he glanced back at the sobbing woman he loved, married, and believed to have been his better half. SX267 grimaces at the thought of his own reprisal.

My horses produced a much greater return on my investment than my wife ever had.

There was also no love lost in another life. Adoration exploded in a spectacle of free-falling bits of newspaper as a crowd of actors sang to an audience that whistled and applauded. Vanessa stood center stage below the carbon arc spotlights, blew kisses and bowed as deeply as her legs would allow. Giant red velvet curtains plunged down a foot in front of her before she traded hugs and kisses with her fellow thespians.

My need for love transferred to the playhouses. In these places, I found family, self-worth, and mild contentment.

A haze of flickering candles and cigar smoke lit the boudoir. She passed the blushed colored walls, lowered her suitcase and slipped out of her silk robe. He sat on the burgundy velvet chaise. His white shirt was unbuttoned, disclosing a bearish chest and a perspiring belly. In one of his hands he held a glass full of wine that he offered her. Vanessa accepted, took a sip and arched her back to pour the rest down her naked body. His sneer broadened and his arms widened to a welcome.

He'd been very generous. But still- no love lost...

His tongue traveled all over her in a concerted effort to retrieve every dribble of the vintage red. She was stretched out under him, caressing herself with her own fingers and enjoying the sensation of her flesh. When he entered her, she reveled within the hunger of her own sexual satisfaction. Gripping her chin, he forced her into direct eye contact. Their connection was shallow, especially given that his movements stopped. All she could submit to was a deadened stare. With her pleasure interrupted, she stood up, irritated, and began dressing.

The man inhaled from a cigar. Smoke softly escaped from his thick lips and dissipated into the air as he watched her and asked, "Where are you going?"

She faced him after buttoning a long coat of crushed taffeta and slowly walked to the round wood table where a satchel of money was resting. She smirked as she held the money at her bosom. The man leaped forward and tightened his palms around her throat. She dropped the satchel and struggled to free herself from his grip. Unable to, her hands released his forearms and swung wildly around until they found the stem of the empty wine glass. She cracked it against the wall and pushed it into his face. His eyes ran rivers of red. She fainted at the sight and fell to

the plush Persian rug he'd once given her for her birthday. Later, she woke to answer questions from the police. The dead man's body was still there. His moist round face leaned sideways, with the pools of blood from his eyes still streaking down his cheeks.

It was self-defense. Either way, I owed no one anything. And after all, life is never fair.

Who was there when I had a life taken by Alzheimer's?

Standing in front of a full-length mirror, Danny daily monitored his aging self. Each new wrinkle seemed to carve out a new scar in his heart. His penis barely reacted when he pumped it and no one, male or female, seemed even remotely interested in touching it. The notion of time became abstract and unreliable. It took hours for him to pee. He could never find any of his stuff and accused everyone of stealing. Physically shrinking today a little more than yesterday, he'd also started to forget his name and where he was. The green lawns were wet and supple from a fresh cut. From his asylum, he watched swarms of ladybugs congregate outside his room's small window. He had no lovers. No spouse. No children. The only friends he had were those ladybugs. Sometimes they'd lose their balance, end up on their backs, and he would carefully nudge them back onto their legs. This gave him great joy and often he'd weep and not know why. Counting their tiny black spots kept his brain sharp for a time. But eventually he forgot that there was a window and badly cut his arms after smashing into it, in an attempt to reach the insects.

In the end, I forgot how to swallow and choked to death on a dinner roll.

Traveling alone on foot, in another life, he made his way cross country. He never used the same name and rarely lived or worked anywhere for more than a few weeks.

I was like a ghost.

Determining his destiny as he went made him feel like a whole man. He never committed himself to anyone or anything other than to the notion of moving. Langston was what southern folks called a rolling stone. He didn't know his people, where they were or came from, and he didn't care. Living for the endless moment with a sketchy future was how he liked his life best. He enjoyed women and made dozens of babies with them that he never knew the names of or stuck around long enough to see born.

A bunch of bastards...fuck them. At least that's how I felt then...

Langston's god was mobility until the day the gods of men chased him to his death. It happened on an ordinary day, right before the fall harvest. Days were still balmy, but it got chilly at night.

I started looking for someone to keep my bed cozy.

The morning sun rose and baked away the moist dew coating the tall green grass. Pairs of legs in indigo denim overalls joined to form an intolerant mass that marched along a field of wheat towards the rooming house where he was staying. Langston and the red-haired, freckle-faced girl were startled awake by stones shattering the bedroom window and clattering on the wooden floor. Sneaking a peek, he saw the mob outside, yelling and shaking their rifles. Some wielded rakes with handles on fire. The innkeeper tried to calm them, but they simply trampled over him and broke down the front door. Swiftly, Langston pulled on his trousers, tightened his suspenders and laced up his old cowhide boots. He grabbed a nickel flask filled with rye whiskey, climbed out a back window, slid down the roof and ran through a field of black-eyed Susans.

That was the part I always relished the most. Damn it! Nobody could ever catch me...

This kind of escape reminded him of his younger years, when he would steal chicken eggs from the farm near the orphanage where he grew up.

One time, those white men almost went crazy and threatened to string me up, tar and feather me. Lucille stepped in and made them remember how she nursed them as babies and raised them as if they were her own. That woman saved my hide so many times.

Langston ran as fast and as far as his feet took him. He passed through fields of corn and wheat until he finally stopped when he landed on rock and railroad tracks. In the distance, he saw a train approaching. It spewed steam and sounded its horn. Bent over, he tried to catch his breath and searched his pocket for his flask. It wasn't there. He gasped for spit, but there was none. He coughed and heaved for air through a bone-dry throat. Leaning further over, he grabbed his knees to steady his stance and fell to one side, clutching the jarring tightness in his chest. Swallowing empty air, his head spiraled into a dizzy fit. He saw through his hazy sight the gang of hateful and scowling faces drawing closer. His breathing staggered as his blood vessels contracted and closed. Langston's heart imploded just as he took his last breath and seconds before 16,000 tons of iron pulverized his body at sixty miles per hour.

Sixty seconds.

Marvin fidgeted and shifted his weight to his other side. The sweltering heat brought with it a suffocating humidity in his next life.

Another sixty seconds.

Marvin stared at his watch and nervously looked behind him. The line stretched three blocks across Jamaica Avenue.

Another sixty seconds.

He sighed again, shifted his weight once more and licked away the hot, tart sweat above his upper lip. Lifting his baseball cap, he scratched his damp, itchy scalp just when the boy behind him shoved him and yelled, “MOVE IT, PUDGE!”

Marvin sulked forward, tightening the space in the line. The boys ahead of him responded with eyes rolls and covered their noses.

I stunk...I knew it.

Another sixty seconds.

A renewed energy pulsed through the crowd as Tommy Hobbs slid up the blinds of his hobby shop. He was going out of business and everything had to go. Marvin had heard from another collector that Tommy was willing to sell his 1954 Bowman Ted Williams 66A for half its value. There hadn't been any problems with him getting the dough. He'd been quietly stealing dollars from his mom's panty drawer and purses for years. She didn't understand his obsession with collecting, but she did allow it if the costs were reasonable.

She'd be pissed if she knew about this, though. But the card is worth at least a few grand in mint condition. That's the issue. I don't know what condition it's in.

Another sixty seconds...shit.

The boy behind him pushed him again and Marvin ended up leaning into the boys ahead of him. They turned back, glared and rammed him in retaliation. Marvin's body knocked the boy behind him down to the sidewalk.

I was used to poor treatment. But at five eleven and three hundred pounds, I could take on most men besides boys...I was built like a fucking ox.

The boy was pulled up by his friends. They surrounded Marvin and each took turns punching and slapping him. Marvin took the blows and kept his eyes on his watch.

Ah, the last sixty seconds.

Tommy Hobbs Hobby finally opened its doors and the mass of men and boys standing in line thrust forward in one large heap. Bodies cascaded over like dominoes. Those still standing jumped and ran over the lying bodies to reach the front door of the store. Faces were pounded on by feet. Hands and arms reached up for help. Marvin sunk like quicksand as lighter, more flexible boys stepped over him to gain an edge onward. His watch was crushed and his pockets were quickly pillaged. He wept as he saw the mob rush through the door of the shop and demolished it. Someone threw rocks and the boys began entering through the busted windows. Tommy Hobbs fled out the side door as Marvin heard the faint blaring of sirens. Their sound soon deafened him and his mind went black. Marvin's mashed body had suffocated by the time an EMT knelt beside him and tried to lift his shoulders.

It was a silly death, really...just as deprecating as that life had been. No family but my poor old mother came to my funeral. She brought her most recent boyfriend, who stood at a distance and smoked. As they left, he tossed his cigarette butt on my grave.

Vividly, SX267 remembers his most recent life and death. Moist air collided with the rising and crashing waves of the bay. The water rushed against the bright orange bridge he stood on the edge of. Looking down into the turbulent fluidity, Lucas saw reflections of his life's most unforgettable moments: the custody hearing for his children, opening divorce papers, his first day on the job as an engineer, his wedding to his college sweetheart, losing his virginity, breaking his leg on a ski trip, being sick with scarlet fever, his first kiss, riding a tricycle, walking without falling to his mother...in his mind, he was a baby again, cradled at her breasts, while she stared down at a him with a triumphant smile.

*For a time, I had second thoughts: What if my life is valuable? What if it has a purpose?
What if I could find it in my heart to love myself enough to rise above any of life's
challenges, like how the waves of the sea freely lift and lower, splattering my bare toes?
Where is GOD now?*

Salty air parched his lips and again he saw her smug face, packing bags, throwing away trash and screaming so forcefully she unintentionally spat in his face. She hated the sound of his voice, she shouted.

What could I have said in defense to that?

Violent waves buried his body as he surrendered within them as if they were a liquid aphrodisiac. With shut eyes, he breathed in the brine. He let go and took flight. Passage to Transitory was instantaneous and painless. There was a stark silent darkness and then full radiating light. He was weightless and felt fully contained by his present existence. Looking around, he saw pure beams of converging light that pulsed in constant movement. As the beams of light neared him, he recognized the forms of human faces and bodies.

Here I am in my latest life...trapped within my own consciousness.

SX267 observes the activity of the Inner Core, which is filled with Life Re-assignment Stewards (LRSs) gathering their Soul Subjects, entering and shutting doors to advisory rooms. After the surge of movements stop, he goes to the Sanctuary. It's the place in Transitory where the three-sided minerals called prisms, which display the current lives of humans on Earth, are stored.

Ignorance is bliss.

If you truly believe that, you've learned nothing still.

SX267 winces, turning to find his personal Light Guardian, Jasper, levitating several feet above him, dressed in glowing light.

“In this classroom of torture?”

Your understanding is misguided.

“I’d rather be reborn. What has my soul in this life left to offer?”

Open your heart and have communion with THE WAY. You’ve been told this time and time again. You’re a very stubborn soul.

“Throw me into a black hole.”

Grace cannot die and neither shall you.

“How can I be in charge of Life Re-assignment for others?”

SX267 holds up his arms and then allows them to drop lazily back to his sides and says,

“They’re useless.”

Be grateful for all that you are and will ever be.

After SX267 watches Jasper vanish, he continues striding down the moonlit halls.

MX980 runs past him, giggling and holding a prism. Most here adore MX980. Her suicide was accidental. Her mother huffed from a rag drenched with gasoline and blacked out. MX980, unable to wake her mother, fell asleep with her face against that same rag. Many hours later, her mother woke to find her child dead.

Her next life will come around and she’ll be re-assigned. Who or what will she choose to be, I wonder? I know what I’d choose. I’d be a beautiful cabaret singer with gleaming black hair and sapphire eyes. My name would be brassy, like Rossie or Billie. I’d perform at a grand club with crystal chandeliers and satin tablecloths. The clientele would be made up of only the most civilized and cultured people. Crowds would adore me and I’d

have my pick of potential lovers...I used to love the feeling of being in love and I'm curious of what became of my past lovers. Could some of them be here? What if they're living among me, but unable to recognize my soul inside its' new exterior? Have I walked past one of them in the IC? Or helped one be re-assigned?

Wandering deeper into Transitory, he passes the Transportal Room. He's tried endlessly to manipulate and bribe his way to get inside. It's the place where all souls from Earth transition into their next human coating. The process is called Exspiromorphosis and the area is restricted to Light Guardians. When souls transition, they're very impressionable. To protect them from being influenced by lesser evolved souls, only the most evolved are allowed to be near them. *Did I have such a head start? Was my soul surrounded by the best and brightest when I transitioned each time?*

He walks back to the Sanctuary and stares at several prisms. The lives flash as moving pictures across the surface of the minerals. There's Will, a homeless man. SX267 senses his history. Will was once a very successful architect, but lost it all when his wife left him. After she was awarded the house and the children, Will became depressed, lost his job and began living on the street. SX267 watches the man smoke crack inside his makeshift home of scrap plastic and cardboard. He looks away to another and Joyce fills up the prism screen. She's a short woman who's always angry and beats her husband and bullies her kids. His eyes skip to yet another prism and he smiles.

It's Renee. SX267 often watches her write in her journal. In it, she expresses how much she misses her first love. Though he rejected her and married someone else, she can't see herself with another man. She also writes short stories and dreams of one day being a successful author. SX267 senses her depression. She sometimes imagines how life would be for her family and

friends if she no longer lived. But eventually these thoughts pass and she's happy again, out with her friends and meeting new people.

I wish I could tell her that she'll fall in love again, many times, and that suicide is never a real solution. But she can't hear me...

He blushes, embarrassed to see her in bed topless and wearing only panties.

2.

Transitory is made of the universe. The open cosmos with its infinite galaxies are visible from its reference point. Its stationary manifestation is maintained by the collective consciousness of its inhabitants, which is comprised of the most evolved souls to the least. As the universe changes, so does Transitory. It's always shape-shifting, adapting and manifesting to the spiritual necessities of every soul's awareness.

There's no exact count of floor levels, or number of advisory rooms and sleeping quarters. Quantities of doors being used as entrances or exits can't be determined. The needs of every soul are attended to and each is sustained through THE WAY'S grace all it requires. The inhabitants appear to each other in complete human form. They breathe in and exhale the atmosphere, regurgitating it and unwittingly affirming of their own existence.

Every soul reincarnates. But only a few get to choose who or what they return to consciousness as. The exact number is unknown. Soul dwellers on Earth are solely under Transitory jurisdiction. When Earthlings die, their souls are contained and compressed inside the core of temporal stars. As the stars rotate, their densities steadily increase, allowing for an unknown number of chosen souls to escape. These chosen souls end up at the entrances of the IC, awaiting their Final Review and Life Re-assignment. Unselected souls are immediately transitioned in the Transportal Room, where they're randomly re-assigned new lives and sent back to Earth.

The Soul Subjects usually have vague or fading memories of their most current past life but no recollections of any of their previous ones. They arrive tired and slightly shocked due to