

...drugged by envious slugs like a chick slipped wit mickey...

...and Christian had to motivate and make another move up outta illadelph...and while he was more than happy to be on his way home, it was still difficult to go...but he knew he had to... regardless of where he was in the world, he knew there was nothing and no place like home...the Universe entitled through the exclusive stitching on tongues of exclusively classic Nike Air Ones...NYC was the space...and while The Badlands was the origin of his existence, now home took on a new spot...after all, he couldn't bear to see in the flesh what was going down in his mom's crib...and besides, there was really no room there for him now for various reasons...and anyway, thun tongue was entirely too sharp...Chris, he'd wind up saying some real foul shit to Jerry and let his words commence the manifestation of physical altercations...and if the hood came up outta him like that right now... "...there's no telling where I might go...what I might do..."...Christian could only imagine, and then apologize for even contemplating something along those lines... home was now really where his heart was at...Emil had always been close to him...him and Damon were the two brothers Chris never biologically had...that ain't stop nothin' though, 'cause Christian, Emil and Damon was like brothers...really, like chess pieces labeled Bishop and Q in back-in-the-day attained power and respect through juice formulated as fluid, they were brothers, kin in every sense of the word...and now that it was only them two, that's how Chris looked at eM...

...hopping in the hooptie he had bought Ayasha,

because his pockets were pathetically penniless and her car was the epitome of economy on gas, he bounced from the spot with the talking walls and imprints of imperfections he impressed on particular individuals...Chris headed north on the turnpike through Jersey...and bypassing any parts of The Badlands, he floated right out to Gilligan's Island...eM lived out there in a ill crib, the spoils of his sacrifices and successes...and it was all Chris ever dreamed of...he just hadn't gotten there yet...from the fenced-off front, eM's fortress was surrounded by moats of plush lime green lawns guarded by atrocious alligators starring as three ravenous rottweilers that would tear that ass up if the eminent scent of an intruder was not sniffed as recognizable...the plush roots which once lay dead as ashes were now resuscitated, brought back to life...and like the lawns alive again, so too was eM, as he began to grab his life and see the science of world around him...and with three seclusive stories each bigger than the crib they grew up in together, eM's home was home to Christian...eM had been there for his thunthun...his sunsun...his brother Chris...from day one...it was no wonder why Chris floated straight out there...that was where he could escape the chaos of the world and sort it all out...it was an inescapable time warp...clouded with the haze of greenery and green-boxed squares, there were no confines or restraints...and just like the island Gilligan and his counterparts were trapped on, there was one way in, one way out, and one was stuck if he didn't have a ride to float...and as far as it was, it's location and strategic setting was almost identical to The Badlands in that way...on the

way, bangin' eM's new album, he couldn't wait to be with his family, his whole clique...primarily his brother...he was most important to him...he loved him...and unfortunately, eM was the only one who could help him with this situation...

...eM's crib was completely different now, as he had done a lot of work with it...he had been going harder than hard, and anyone or thing in his way of going hard had to be eliminated...straight-up annihilated...for life was entirely too short for the nonsense...but more importantly, eM had already been through the bullshit and dealt with the bullshit...eM had gained his manhood through this...here, Chris would have to lose his...and while everyone thought that what Chris had would get him what he wanted, he had all he ever wanted, needed, or could even ask for...now he was here, about to approach eM yet again, because for some strange fuckin' reason, Christian had spazzed out and given it all up...and yeah, shit was fucked up and not completely his fault, but at the end of the day, Chris couldn't even sleep at night knowing some of the shit he had done and some of the shit he had been in and put people through...particularly one individual...the one who murked off on him, methodically masterminding moves on him when his ego would not allow him to see the signs that were ominously evident...here lied the consequences of his own actions, here would lie the torment that had eaten away at him since he thought about maybe picking up the gat and blasting off...after all, he figured there was already a bounty on his head from Ayesha's side...he already had dreams of her Ecuadorian

bloodlines stomping him out in the same way his clique got down in The Badlands...he thought back to the day when thirty seconds lasted an infinite eternity, when he was stuck and scrunched up in that small ass pawn shop with his in-lawed brother Osirus who they called Ossie, Chris was shook to death, stuck and fucked like a mark...an easily-catchable-moving-target that stayed stagnant for its capture...and with that, Christian did not want to be anywhere near TwoFifth and Lex, knowing that's where Ayesha's peoples ran...and knowing they were watching-waiting-and-layin' to see a niggah that looked even remotely like thun...so they could run up spitting gem-star-razor-blades out the mouth, leaving Chris buck-fiftied up, sliced and diced like sautéed onions on the hot as a skillet streets of Harlem world...Chris knew they were sleeping-creepin'-and-crawlin' to catch him in the form of a white lab mouse in the experimental maze of harLEm de español—then air that whole shit out with the hopes that he got caught up in that muthafucka and so what if the rest of the innocent casualties on the block they aired out got hit—

Clearly Christian didn't care when he was buckin' off his emotions at Ayesha—

...why should they care now...?...here, death was wished on that niggah C, so with that, he had to begin to make a move up outta where he was, because Ayesha's peoples all knew where thun lived...and he knew just as well as she did that she ran wit a clique a killers...so did

he...she knew them in the flesh and heard of them in all the songs...the illest killer outta his team wasn't here no more though...so Christian definitely felt hell on earth being a man down...this shit wasn't Damon's fault though...Deem surely had done everything he could from where he was to prevent this...but there was only so much he could do given Chris and how he was getting down...even Damon ain't know who his brother was...so now, here Chris was with his brother...in a position that every brother goes through with another brother...that's what they are there for...yet and still, it fucked up Christian's development in his own eyes...he just hadn't yet acknowledged the fact that it actually brought him full circle to where he needed to be, in this most extreme lesson in patience and humility...the same patience he told Ayesha was a virtue in their early days...like the way her granma, that he had called upon at one point, had told her...the same humility he used to approach Ayesha in those beginning days...from the wake of sunrise...to the slumber of sunset...and back...now corrupted and contorted into something that all the outside authorities changed in their welcoming home of one prodigal daughter, and one rejection of the flock in what could now be considered a wandering and prodigal son, here Christian was to deal with this element he did not want to face...he knew he had to do it on his own...yet and still he couldn't do it all by himself...he had to ask someone...“...a closed mouth doesn't get fed...”...and eM was really the only one he could ask who could understand, ask no questions, and tell no lies...Chris was trying to get there...he just hadn't yet...but he was working on it...

...Christian got up outta the seat he always rocked in at eM's house, right there near the window, and then descended down to the dungeon deemed eM's basement, the studio eM built for his work...he had everything he needed right in the comfort and privacy of his own home...the truth was eM had it like this because he stayed going hard, all day e'ryday...thun did not stop and would not slow down as he lived what Chris knew in his heart and wrote on the page all day...that time waits for no man...yeah, damn right eM was hustling...hustling at this music game trying to get it to the point where he would be alright, and his little thun would be set...every minute was spent getting that shit, only because he was getting these beats right in his dream of living life...doing what he loved to do...Chris wasn't there...and this trip down the cold concrete stairs would strangle Christian's coming of age in the form of upliftment...this was something he didn't know right then...and so instead, all he could think of was what was going down and how it had come down to this...he was fucked up with the fact that this was the situation at hand, yet and still, he continued down the stairs down to the door and down in the chair...eM had the music screeching, slicing the waves of sound so that any and every eardrum would vibrate until the heart felt what he was feeling...here was his dream, and every minute of the day thun went hard...Chris, he had fallen off, not going hard at anything, becoming completely complacent in the life he lived that was clearly inadequate...after all, Ayesha did skate, didn't she...?...he was on the road to recovery, but he was stuck in a way

that cracked his cranium and shattered what ego he did have...and he had entirely too much of it...so now, as he tried to shed it and walk in a different direction from where he had been, he figured he had a lot to do in order to get to a point where this situation would not be a possibility anymore...however, Chris was here because of all he had done...and now...here was, unbeknownst to him, yet another that he would have to contend with..."as if I haven't been doin' enough fightin' already..." he thought to himself, as he let his emotions feel what eM was talking about in four bars by fours bars...this was eM's way of life, it led him out of life's confines and gave him freedom...Christian couldn't even see what his was now...now that Ayesha was gone...

"...how much you need thunthun..."

...and when he asked eM what he had to, eM told him not to worry about it..."...everything happens for a reason..." was what eM told Christian...and they both knew it was true, for they both said it constantly...their thinking was so succinct in certain scenarios, one would think that mentally their brilliance was twinned on some level...that's 'cause when they were younger, they ran around together all day e'ryday, like clockwork...they grew up like that...and they kept going with each other until it was time for them to take different directions...still they approached each obstacle with the same mentality...because they both came up the same...eM had it all, ready to do what society told them the dream was...

“...it’s gonna cost like eleven or twelve hundred...but if you could give me like six or seven...”

...and here Christian was with nothing, as he had followed a different dream towards symbols that would not take away his blackness...he wasn’t supposed to do what he had done...and here he was, paying for it on many levels...he had hit bottom when Ayesha bounced...now he needed a helping hand in just getting back to ground level...for she had always been that hand for him...for a long time...and for some reason, the last time, he rejected that only hand, bit the only one that would feed him...literally...mentally...physically...emotionally...she was everything to him, his world, his whole existence...and now, in trying to find out how to exist on his own again yet in a way never known to him from any of his other exploits, endeavors and encounters in life and love, eM’s hand was the only one that could pull him up...this was where it would go down...

“...hold on for a minute...I’ll be back...”

...and Chris was happy for eM yet hurt by how he could just make moves when he wanted...fiscal constraints were not an issue to or for him...but Chris knew his whole crew and he realized that Emil was the one who had gone the hardest at what he wanted to do for life... “...I’m just coming to the realization...” Christian thought to himself, knowing full well that even though he was going hard right now, he hadn’t been in a minute...that was the problem...and he went hard at something that he

inevitably gave up, so really what was the point of going hard if that's what Chris was gonna do...?...but even eM had been at a point where it all fell and he had to pick all the pieces back up again and keep it moving...and next time go even harder than the last because it was exactly as he said, for life...Christian had it tatted on him...titled it and all that...and still, here he was...maybe if he would have been going hard on all levels in the first place, he wouldn't be in this situation with his brother...because now, Christian looked at his manhood in an entirely different way, and being aware of his actions based on hindsight, through the negative way of life he had created for himself and another, he had to refine his conception and manifestations of strength...and instead of perpetuating incarceration, he needed to live granting freedom through the fairness of the *God* he was working with...he had constructed only to demolish...now he had to create his own genesis, in a dawn giving birth and being born into the position of intellect of his clique...it just so happened that the way he was going and the way his clique was going were two different paths and his didn't lead to what any of his peoples would have as quickly...but he hadn't been going hard...and eM, he stayed going hard all day e'ryday...it took him awhile to get to where he was...eM wasn't playing, though...on any level...part of Christian's problem was once he got what he had, he fucked around with it, on some real-live thinking he was completely-invincible shit...that's what got the rush on, and got him in the situation he was in now, forcing back the thought of committing such a sinful

act...at this point, he had been back and forth and back again...and as he assessed his newfound spirit, he knew he was not supposed to let his mind and person go here...for he had been in many an instance, and understood this most final of numbers, listening to Him as He had told Christian through Word and Action that he was not supposed to feel this type of way...the last command He gave to the world and His people...yet at the same time, he really was down right now...and he could begin to feel the hate flowing in his blood, because he had to come to this kat who was on top, swallowing his manhood because he wasn't up...Chris was on his way though...and his torture was that he wasn't getting there fast enough for his own liking...but he had been down before...and even then, when he was down, he had Ayesha right there with him, so it seemed as if it was all good...he knew how high the stakes were, even eM had told Christian what time it was...told him he wasn't supposed to go at it like that, chill out and let the shit work itself out...but since Christian had an 11x14 piece of paper, on some level, nobody could tell him shit...after all, his bloodlines were dissimilar, but his heart, soul and essence was just like his blood brother...and just as eM was always right, so was Christian...he was the dude they always directed the questions at, because *he* was the smartest kat of them all, he was the one that did it...but sometimes, even Chris didn't have all the answers to all the questions...maybe if he had done some things the way his peoples had, he wouldn't be here having this conversation with eM...yet again...that was what r.i.p.ped thun heart out...'cause eM

knew what time it was immediately when it happened...and no matter what, he was gonna be there because he knew his brother was trying to do shit the right way, and he would help him in any way he could...even lay down his life for him if it came down to it...and Christian felt the same way...but something about it took his manhood away, because he knew eM would never come to him on some shit like this...Christian would do anything he could, he was always there, no matter what he could do...but he ain't have it like that, so if eM was fucked up and needed dough to make any type of move, what use would he actually be...?...he didn't have it poppin' like that...that's what hurt the most, for what if it did go down like that...?...it made Chris think of all the time he wasted...he hadn't been going hard and was blaming it on any and everything except for his own self...here he was going against his own grain, so that now, he was stuck...and as much as he had to make moves he couldn't...last time he had to really make a move, eM looked out for him...eM always looked out for him...he loved eM for that because Emil was his brother...he looked at him like that...they grew up from the dirt together...from first grade recess sessions actin' bent singing "how dry I am"...now they were both dry...he had asked eM to hold himself down and look out for himself when no one else would...and eM, eM told Christian that he should do the same, only at a different time...eM knew what Christian felt was real, but he just wanted his brother to be careful, because everything had been lost, and the stakes were indeed mad high...this was

the type of shit eM could do...but Christian, eM knew just as well as Chris that his brother couldn't...Christian, he had too much to lose...and with everything eM had, he tried to protect and safeguard his brother's safety...because his brother had done it right, and in a way that no one else in the crew had...and just as eM kept platinum plaques that Christian admired with awe, eM respected and cherished his brother's academic accomplishments...he was that smart niggah...and he did have too much to lose...yet and still, Christian did what he did because he was going hard then...and he wasn't trying to hear nothing else...but then he stopped going hard in the right way but in the most vile of ways, so that he was actually shittin' on the fact that the stakes were as high as they were...it was just that serious...Chris knew life could not be a trip one moved oblivious through...and because he had, here he was in this final of tests, most vicious of toils, most terrible of snares...because here, he had to ask, nothing could go down without the help he needed from his brother...and Christian was humble...something he had not been when this situation came to a head right ahead of him as he instead looked behind, backing down a street he was supposed to be driving straight through...yes, Christian had flipped scripts, slammed on the brakes, thrown it retroactively in reverse, and backed down that shit when he was supposed to be moving ahead...that's what it seemed like in real life...Christian had to put the pieces back together...and eM was there for him on all levels...funny thing was, eM was always there, through Christian's triumphs and defeats...as Chris was

for eM's pitfalls and ascents...Chris always hoped they would meet at the top, click flute glasses full of champagne and toast, celebrating success...but he hadn't completed his part of the bargain...and as the bitch was not Ayesha, but what she so desperately described as hindsight which hit him hundredfold for forgetting how ill it could be, Christian was now stuck to *build* back up from the destruction of his lifestyle with his other half—his heart and his wifey—who had always tried to grow with him, together...yet he was here to do it alone with the awareness of his own actions...the same actions that led him here...he needed help in this spot his brother in the *cypher* he moved with..."...how had it gotten to this shit here...?..." Christian thought...and he realized that he hadn't been going hard...but he would now...

"...here...don't wet it...it ain't nothin'..."

...eM gave Chris fifteen green swollen-faced Benjamins...double what he asked for and more than he said he needed—just in case...and like Esau graciously giving up his birthright in being stuck by Jacob, when eM did this, Christian's manhood was mysteriously taken...and he knew the time would soon come where he would have to pursue in a way like no other...he knew at one point he would have to begin Chasing Ayesha...

...but it was only him now...yet at the same time, it was only them two left, on some man to man shit...and while he didn't know how or why, the gore and gritty grunge and grime of the greenest of envious sins challenged his brain and his rejuvenated and renovated modus operandi with life in a way he couldn't understand...for he loved his brother...but now it was his only...

...and so without question, eM would hold his brother down, 'cause he loved him too...last time he had told Christian that he knew he was trying to do shit right, and he was better than a lot a nigguhs that was coming at him sideways with a lot of bullshit schemes and snake plans to get at him..."...you family...and I know you trying to do shit the right way...we all fuck up sometimes though...it ain't nufin..."...but as Chris motioned to take the money from this man's hand, he stopped...for in a split second, he also wanted to bite it off, even though it was the only hand that could or did feed him...and Christian knew here he had to trust in his brother...and on some level, *acknowledge* his status in this *cypher*...for he would be damned if he did not...yet, he'd be damned if he did...take it...

...and as he tried with all he had to push this emotion out of his head, this was his torture...

...and as the tear fell from his eye he watched his brother go back to work at the beats...and as the volume increased, so did the pain in Christian's heart...so did the fight to ward off his ego in his attempt to exist in humility...for it was not him at all...instead, it was in fact, the ego which tried to penetrate his person and circulate hate in his blood to his heart...and here, this was where Christian's new war would begin...

...within himself...

...and he wondered about this most as his torture...

...and he wondered when it would end...

yes, he was tired of smoking, but the fact of the matter was he knew she needed it and he didn't...he had already resigned himself to the fact he was going to give that gift to her, because he loved her enough to change inconsequential things in the name of making her happy...because of the love he carried in his heart for her...now he was back at it, reduced to his lowest common denominator through what had become the most unbearable of times...

He sat surrounded by her, in a house that began to speak to him...and it wasn't that he was going crazy, it was that the walls were actually speaking to him...they would call to him and he would call back...and together, this continuum was one he could no longer avoid, no longer sidestep...and in dealing with it head on, he realized he was not ready for what that brought...

"Have you had any thoughts about committing suicide?"

"Yes," he responded.

"Have you actually come up with a plan, have you seen yourself committing the act? How does it play itself out?"

"I don't really imagine it, I just know I got the gun on the nightstand...yeah, there have been times when I thought I could just pick it up and do what I had to do."

These were the questions of the therapist who screened him at his evaluation appointment..."I know they need to see how crazy I am," his way of describing it...as well, the intake counselor at the rehab clinic probed with the same line of

questioning, after the shrink referred him to rehab because he smoked weed...“I graduated from Dartmouth with straight A’s, I wrote a 300-page Masters thesis and gave the Graduation speech...I was valedictorian...and I did all that high...I don’t think the weed is affecting me negatively.” That was the Christmas talk, as he was frantically yet methodically completing his Ph.D. applications for four more schools...it was now weeks later, though...and because so much had changed, things weren’t what they had originally been because of what went down and how it jumped off...

He ran out of the crib yelling at the walls which spoke to him...

“Can I go now...?...you’ve already left...can I go too please...?...can I have peace of mind too...?!?...Is that too much to ask for...?”

He got in the second car and lurked off from communicative corridors quicker than fast...first he drove around the block a few times...after that, he floated to his man’s crib—the kat that was supposed to help him find a new apartment...he knew this kat was flaky, but it was a hookup for him...he’d soon realize it wasn’t, but only a shortcut he always tried to take under drastic circumstances...and of course, thun was nowhere to be found...so with that, he had to go back to the bane of his existence...the house that knew no remorse...because it screamed to him and at him in unison with his heart, for it did cry out with them...those walls in that house...

He was driving the car, the set of spiral notebooks sitting next to him...they were for her, but she wouldn’t read them...as the rain began to pound upon the

windshield, his reaction was to slow the wipers down...he didn't really care anymore about how he was gonna make it...he hoped the notebooks would be okay, because they needed to make it...he, on the other hand, didn't...he wanted her to have them in his death because she would not take them from him in life...as he realized he couldn't see anymore, he told his mother he loved her...and he told his whole family to pray for him, but he wasn't scared because he knew that Deem and Nana and many others were waiting on that side for him...and as the showers began to pour, he left the wipers on the slowest interval, leaving him with only brief scenes of clarity through the oceanic onrush...he let the wheel go as it will, and combined with the rain, his car began to spin outta control until it spun through the dividers...swishswish...and spinning onto the other side of the highway...swishswish...spun into the oncoming truck which spun into a jackknife to avoid the inevitable spin of ceased suscitation...swishswish...and upon the crash he jumped with a body spasm that left him sitting in a running car that had never gone anywhere...

It had been five weeks to the day that she was gone, leaving him with no word...not an email or even a postcard...merely a small note in the envelope with the keys...the note said nothing though...and an answering machine message, because at the point it went down, he assumed she had to do it that way...he had heard nothing though, only scant responses through his friend who was now her's...he knew that his only word on her was

through his friend Katrina...but now, as he found out she was going to Atlanta to stay with her, it all became too overwhelming...he got word at work when they were on the phone...

“The reason I kept telling you to call me back in ten minutes is because I read your email about how you felt Emory University was calling you...she’s coming to Atlanta, and she’s gonna stay here with me...”

All of a sudden, yesterday was now today...sitting in his chair at his desk, he folded immediately as his chest cavity deflated instantaneously...his head at his knees, perforated at a line which had lost two entire beltholes worth of waist-weight, he held his head on each side with the long and wiry fingers that were large enough to easily encapsulate his entire cranium, with the hopes that his brain would not expand and explode from within his skull...the words from his friend slayed him...in the same way her departure did...he had received an email with a prayer he had to send to seven people to bring forth a miracle...and when he sent it, he really hoped for his miracle to materialize...he never thought it would be this though...

Christian sat in the house and the walls continued to scream at him...they whispered in his face, they blew in his ear...but the pain came from how they looked at him...and they sent his imagination into a frenzy...for he was a scholar, disciplined in the archery of academia, yet a writer, with a creative energy that emanated from a place

he had been destined to rep for a long time...and it was this fatal combination that fueled his mental, his imagination so vivid, his brain would move marathons per minute, causing his emotions to overtake him and oppress his efforts at rationality and rebuilding what now had been destroyed...for his one plus two did not make three because when Christian was given Ayesha, they somehow collectively built to destroy their *understanding* on more levels than anyone but Ossie and that percentage could calculate...but there was nothing he could do...and the leafy greenery which once helped to slow his brain down, only escalated the velocity of his thought...and he knew she was not coming back...yet, he didn't and felt that he couldn't do it without...

Christian knew he could give his manuscripts, both written and unwritten, to his man P. eye. P...thun knew his vision, and would make sure that shit came to fruition...his Uncle Simon down South who had put him onto the science of life with music would get the turntables and the records...he wanted both his nieces and his nephew to have the dough—what little there was of that shit—so that maybe if it amounted to anything by the time they were twenty-one, at least they would catch a little dough from their long lost uncle...he would leave his mom a note with Katrina in Atlanta to make sure she knew he loved her with all his heart and soul...he would apologize to his dad for not going the extra mile he had not been able to go, in knocking out the Ph.D. and being the first doctor in his family...he didn't know how he

would explain it to Emil...not after Deem...but he would want eM to know he tried to hold his head, but when it exploded, there was nothing he could do...he had tried, "for real dun, I gave it all I could, but I just couldn't maintain no more..."...the words for Kila and Ossie were still ungraspable, because he knew they would understand, but he would want them to know he loved them...he wanted his friends to know, but he knew some of them would be fucked up, not expecting this shit, because he was better than that, smarter than that, and really stronger than that...and they couldn't see where he was, as much as they did...and Ayesha, he would ask Katrina to sit down with her and explain that if she couldn't hear him in life, please read him in death, so she could know where he was with her, stuck without any way of communication...he didn't want to hurt her...it was just that he didn't want to hurt anymore...and if she could read the words, they may not be absolutely right, but they would be as much as he could bear in order to get her to understand how he had been broken down to his lowest common denominator, his weakest and most vulnerable form...

Christian guzzled the forty of danney in the whip...the gat sat in the passenger side..."I'm sorry about the mistakes I've made...I am only human, but regardless I should have made better decisions...ultimately, they were mistakes..."...he was drunk in his pain, and as he continued to pummel his person with poison, the gat began to guide him...he cocked the gat back, while frantically writing his last words, his final testament...and

after he had finished the forty, he apologized to her...because he didn't want to hurt her...he just didn't want to hurt anymore...sitting behind the driver's seat in the pitch black of night, he picked up the pitch black steel and with one squeeze, opened his mouth and pitched back to the essence of life...and when the gunshots stamped in the TV shootout, he woke up and realized he had to make some sort of move..."Why the fuck am I buggin' out like this...CAN'T YOU LEAVE ME ALONE NOW...?"

Christian got up off the couch and tried to walk around the crib, maybe some motion would take his mind off where it had gone...he knew he couldn't go to that place, but now he wasn't sad, nor was he depressed...he was tired...Christian had lost his fear of death because he knew when He felt it was time for him to go, He would take him...and Christian would have no choice but to go with Him, if He let him...and anyway, his peoples was on the other side...they had left here and were now there, and if he was to go from here to there, at least he knew he had enough clique to hold Heaven down...the same way his peoples used to rock from Spafford to Rikers, Clinton to Bedford...the more the merrier...that was the greatest factor in jail...but for him, it would be the least to think about in death...he didn't really understand why he was going to this point, because on some real shit, he was a smart muthafucka...and he wasn't cocky, but he was blatantly honest when he went in the bathroom and looked in the mirror saying "I'm a bright kat...and I gotta do some shit to rep for my dogs in the hood... 'til the day

they lay me down to rest...”

And he could only make guarantees here, because he had already sold the gat to Ossie...but there'd be no telling if he hadn't...that's how he knew he was smart, because he thought there might come a day when he was here...it was just a contingency plan though...he never thought that shit would come to life and breathe her sweet breath in his face...it was laced with her like the dust in thun's last weed...it was covered in her like the blood on the Tims of many a Badlands mobster after the usual friendly neighborhood stompout...it was cloaked in her like the deceit, lies and turmoil that surrounded the atmosphere he had created...he turned the faucet on, cupped his hands and began to violently throw water in his face, as if he could wash the thoughts away like grease on his lips from a good fried chicken meal...he washed once...and he thought if he had gotten baptized this past weekend, maybe He might have washed it away for him...he washed twice...but this tap water was far from holy and sacred...and when he looked back in the mirror, he was walking in the forest...the knapsack on his back contained the critical pieces he knew would get to his family once he was found...he left all the important notes...he gave all the necessary reasons to all the important people, and in his writing, they would all begin to realize his walk through the flaming foyers of hell were more than just "...getting over it..."...it wasn't that at all, and she was probably the only one who in her heart knew that...he had finished his chase of Ayesha, yet she would not let him catch up to her...as a matter of fact, she wouldn't even let him get

within a block's radius of her, and so with that, he was chasing an infinite void which would never be captured, slowed or even seen...and now he would throw it to her in death because she would not catch it in life...he stole the heater from his man Ossie who he had originally sold it to...he knew thun would not just give it up to him, so he had to git him for it...after all, it was his though, right...?...and he could no longer bare his fuck-ups upon himself that he had acted upon her...he could not make peace of mind and ultimate sanity with her, so he would no longer hold it...and while he had taken it to the Highest and Utmost in prayer, at this point, he not only rebuked his plan, but he could not see where He was making it right...he didn't understand that His plan had not been illuminated to him yet, but he didn't have enough patience to sit and wait...he hoped he could be forgiven for that...but he knew He might take some issue to it...another decision he was going to make knowing very well it could be yet another mistake...but humanity would not let this human make it through this time looking humane...because as he lifted the gat to his temple, with eyes outstretched like filaments in light bulbs popping from light to dark, he yelled his life into death beckoning the one in death that held him down in life...

“.....DEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEMMM.....”

...POP...

He opened his eyes as his head hit the faucet, water

splashing all over him and the sink...he looked at himself in the mirror...but he didn't recognize the person staring back at him...he couldn't even push the tears out right now...he didn't know he would be able to run rivers of tears tomorrow...

Trying to clear the air of his mind, he walked into the kitchen, and in the drawer under the dish drain, pulled out the long knife...this was the sharp knife dresser...he had no gem stars—she had taken her razors with her and the butterknife just wouldn't do...he looked at the blade of the knife...then he ran his thumb across it, to make sure it was sharp enough for it to be quick...he had no can opener to sharpen it up, but it was good enough to do the job he needed to do quickly...and he knew he would be making her mother happy, and probably even the rest of her family...but for him, he felt that his life was an even exchange for the restoration and repair removal left by him on her...he looked down now at the back of his right hand...he examined the tattoo he had gotten for his younger brother the day after his birthday...this was also the same year his younger brother passed away from this world..."... 'til the day they lay me down to rest..."...and he really hoped his clique would understand he felt that way...this time he quickly ran his thumb across the blade as the quick slice of the knife let red run fervent through his skin...he turned his hand over and analyzed the design of his palm...and then quickly perusing the bracelet on his wrist he had taken from his mom, the salty fluid flew quick from his eyes as his quick utter uttered "I love you mommy" ...and relinquishing the status quo, he fell

through quick sand quick as he sliced his wrist quick so as to not quickly stunt and turn back...and since he couldn't click he quicked and slit the other...he thought about his college dorm Resident Advisor training his last year of undergrad...he was co-president of the R.A. Association, and in one session, he told the resident shrink not to make light of people wanting to slit their wrists, because it wasn't a light-hearted or funny situation...he didn't know then his brother would be caught quick with a click...nor did he know he would be quick to slit...he walked a few steps and with that dropped to his knees...and he had fallen in the dining room...over a set of empty Xerox boxes he had brought home from work to pack for his move...

He went into the bedroom, and with his spiral, began to incessantly write with the thumbs whose flesh was raw from writer's biting block and pen friction from the speed at which the cursive splashed ink within the papers lines...he focused his attentions here for the time being...but when he completed the vent session which would one day turn into his most valued work, he began his Bible reading...exhausted from his brain, its work and its motion, in an instant within reading three verses, temptation punched him in the snout, and with that, he passed out, dropping the Bible...

Christian found himself sitting on the ground, looking at the curb on the block...the ambulance was rushing in with police and he could hear his sister Kila screaming her head off...but he couldn't really go to her, because he himself did not know what to do...and he watched as they

took him away, and he couldn't bear to see the blood on the wall, brains soaking the paint...he couldn't bear to see the hole in the wall where the slug smashed through reality...

("I've already got two in my living room to deal with," Christian thought.)

He couldn't even bear pissing out the liquor that was plaguing his bladder because he could not bear the site of the bathroom, whether it be the actual room or the act...because he had just lost his younger brother, his heart...why did he have to do it, was all he could think to himself...with all the people and the love around him, why did they take him...why did he have to go by his fuckin' self...?

He looked up and saw that the lights were on and the car commercial that FOX ran on the late night was blaring through the TV...he looked to see what had happened, and when he looked at the clock, he saw it was 2:30am...he got up and turned out the light...grabbing the remote control and turning down the volume, he realized his miracle would be much different...and so much more...almost...he got back into bed...

Unfortunately, now she was going to Atlanta...he couldn't stop thinking about Emory...and he couldn't hold his head anymore...he ran out of his office, and for the first time, he began to cry...kicking the ice that the fluke-fifty degree weather had started to melt, he abused the frozen water and cried while he spoke to her...and he stopped in the middle of the field, took out his rollerball pen, and

with the point now unsheathed, he stabbed himself in the left side of the neck, and violently crossed over to his right, blowing his throat wide open for the world to see and hear...and for only the two of them to feel...

He kept walking through the field as his tears clouded his eyes and vision, and while on some level it came and ended quickly, this wasn't one he had to force out...this one came...in the same way it came when he spoke to Katrina and told her he was tired...very very tired...and he didn't want to hear from her about Ayesha...and he didn't want to hear from his mom about her conversation with Ayesha...he didn't want to hear from his family about his mom's conversation with Ayesha's mom...he only wanted to hear from her...all he wanted was her...all he wanted was to reconcile a remedy with her...but he knew he couldn't and with that came the most terrible of pains...because what is one to do when one needs to talk to someone but can't even formulate the words to have that conversation...what good is it to apologize to a person if those words, while wrought with pain and guilt, aren't as heartfelt as one needed them to be...?

He loved her and cherished her...yet he knew he couldn't talk to her...she had left him, and until she decided to come back in some way, shape or form, he would not bother her until she hit him...but it was driving him crazy...pushing him off the edge the Furious Five and Rakim spoke of...disorienting his balance on the razor-sharp tightrope he walked everyday in the wrong Tims that were a half-size too small and crushing his toes...it was hard enough as is...and while it was the most unthinkable to take a life,

what would be so bad about the fact that he was not affecting anyone...he was only taking his own...?...for even the Bible began telling him that if thee shed man's blood, man would shed him...but it wasn't man whose blood he would shed... "...it is merely thine own..." he thought...and since even later the Good Book would tell him of a time and place for everything, he wondered whether it was his time to heal or kill...clearly he had not stunted or fronted like Hamlet, shook with cowardice of what dreams may come because of taking oneself into the unknown...would he live a thousand nightmares...?...how could he if his peoples was there...?... "...only one way to find out..." ...and he knew the consequence would impact those around him negatively...but only for the fact that it was his own fuckin' life...his and his alone...which he now was without...

He woke up at five a.m., the normal time his biologically conscienced clock had set in his brain since this newfound anniversary—November 30, 2001...the one he had no choice in choosing...he lazily slumbered through the same re-run of M*A*S*H, which was on the morning before...he then got up when the news announced it was six-thirty and he had hit snooze three times 'cause he was already awake...he could no longer justify watching the weather in bed...he got up and did his four sets of fifty morning pushups, a routine he had reacquainted himself with upon her departure...then he took the spiral off the bed and went into the dining room to sit at the table and devote himself to his daily morning ritual of spitting his soul which became engaged by light blue bars and white walls...and when he was finished, he

closed the book, capped his pen and went back into his bedroom, laying down to read from the Bible...and when he finished, he came to a critical realization...because this most decapitating form of torture was one he had never known, never seen, and never fathomed imaginable...and while he was not supposed to, he knew he had been to a place where he almost had...and his journey through hell guided by Him and Deem continued...he could do nothing but walk, with the hope that soon would come the glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel...he just hoped it wasn't light from afar and flames up close...he had been there and back...but he knew They were there because They extended him his seventh-fold wish which equated to one miracle...

His miracle, was being around to tell this story...