

This work is Copyright © Michael J. Natale
It is provided here for personal, non commercial use under a
Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-No Derivatives license.



UNENDING

by

Michael Natale

michael@seewhatsinmybrain.com

I soar through the cobblestone streets of Boston like an ethereal specter; invisible to everyone I pass by – or through – as I speed towards...something. I don't know what, only that I am drawn to it. I can feel it calling to me with desperate need. I feel the tug of other memories and people; of places that I long to visit again, but I cannot resist.

The calling overwhelms me.

Despite my formless state, the memory of flesh conjures physical sensation, and the need resonates through me like a mouth filled with infected teeth.

I round corners and penetrate buildings, people, cars and trucks. I move like I've got some psychic GPS jacked into my consciousness and it has somehow taken control of me, executing its directives with supernatural speed and accuracy.

I just wish I knew where I was going.

The streets of Boston are packed tonight. Winter has come and the snow on the ground is just enough to make the city look inviting, but not enough to keep people off the streets.

The few I pass through who have some spark of perception are aware of me on some level. They shudder as I slide through them. They stop in their tracks; look over their shoulder, or up into the sky. Perhaps they experience déjà vu, or suddenly remember something they didn't realize they had forgotten.

Most just blindly lumber on towards whatever destination they are bound for, completely unaware that a dead man has just passed right through them. Most people are sheep anyway. Their ignorance of me is not a surprise.

But my ignorance of what I am bothers me a little. My memory is a vast, fog-shrouded landscape through which I only get occasional glimpses of what was – and most of it doesn't make any sense.

As I travel, the last moments of my life begin to return to me. I was in my home, and someone was pounding on the door. Who was it that had been so rude to interrupt me during dinner? I could smell them through the door. I recall the odd mixture of Aqua Velva and cigarettes that somehow clashed with the cold tinny bite of gunmetal. I remember they were shouting; threatening me.

I shouted back.

I don't quite recall what happened next, only that I didn't want them to come in and felt I had to defend myself. The small pistol was exploding in my hands when they broke the door down, and a wall of blue and black clad men drew their weapons and returned fire. Or, maybe they just broke the door down and shot me. I can't recall for sure. I don't remember making the decision to shoot at them, but – ahh yes, now I remember.

They had come for the children.

The bodies were in the basement, and I do recall some moral problem with that and the policemen. Seven tiny little corpses. Such sweet meats, those seven had hidden for me. The soft, succulent flesh was forbidden fruit, I knew, but couldn't help myself.

I was weak then, and had fallen prey to the vulnerabilities that came with the rotting bag of meat my spirit was clothed in at the time.

Still, if I had been given a mouth in whatever form I took now, it would have been salivating.

The children were mine, and I remember now that I saw no reason for the police to want to look upon them after I'd fed. They wouldn't understand, and they'd try to keep me from feeding again. That was something I simply couldn't bear. I remember thinking that.

I probably did shoot at the police.

Suddenly I pass through a bus, then a taxi and whirl up towards an office building. My trajectory – or at least, my perception of it – changes. It goes flat, totally horizontal as I silently slide through cubicle after cubicle. They are mostly empty, but some are still staffed with the lifers, the company men and women who willingly give up their personal lives to increase the corporation's profit.

Only one of them here notices me. Part of what I am slides through her skull, and she stops typing and turns her chair around, looking as if she were just tapped on the shoulder.

It's not her, I realize suddenly with cold clarity.

What was that?

A sudden understanding that the woman I just passed through is not the one I am seeking. Curious. I hadn't even really been consciously aware that I was looking for a person.

When I burst out into the city streets from nowhere, I felt the insistent tug drawing me somewhere, but now I knew for a certainty that when I arrived, it would not be a place I sought. It was a person. A specific, living person.

Who that person is, or for what purpose I seek them, I still cannot guess.

Down I spiral, tunneling soundlessly through the concrete and steel, plummeting down through the building and back out onto the street. I plunge into a snow bank that has been plowed up against a lamppost and out the other side. I can feel it getting closer now.

Balance must be restored. The unclean abomination that I was in life must be preserved. Well that's an interesting thought. Could it be possible that there is one alive who would be fully aware of me? Could somehow help me? Perhaps even restore me to flesh? Could I walk among the cities again and feed on the brains and hearts of the young, ingesting all the essence that resides in those magical organs and growing with each feeding?

If only they knew the power, the gifts hidden in the hearts and minds of uncorrupted youth. Perhaps there is someone among the living who knows these dark secrets and would manipulate me to gain that power. Quite possibly this person has found a way to summon me back from the realm of the dead to feed again? But why? Who among the living would have that kind of power?

The thought of being in thrall to one of the living chafes at me. I am a solitary creature, I always was. My eating habits demand I move with discretion among the mortal food that populates the earth.

Mortal food?

Where did that thought come from? I was a mortal once. I was killed, and now am somehow resurrected in spirit form and now travel towards ...what? Surely not Heaven. Hell, then?

Concepts...Inventions...word constructs upon which they hang labels to define and control moral behavior. Written down in order to subjugate those with lesser intellect. There is no Heaven; no Hell. Is there?

Neither of those words changes the throbbing ache that rings through my being as I speed towards my destination.

But the word mortal – well, that gets a reaction. The word disgusts me now. It is such a limiting word, an adjective that restrains and binds with its very utterance. I was one of them – for a time. Forced to move among them wrapped in a carcass of dying flesh. Feeding was difficult, a chore that required so much effort to circumvent the petty laws that govern their society.

As the form I have taken now begins to slow, I recall more of what I was – and still am. The realization that Heaven and Hell do exist begins to seep into my thoughts. Of course they are real. How ridiculous of me not to remember. They aren't exactly places, but concepts and realities created by the One God whose true name escapes me at the moment.

I do recall the War, though. The Great War, the End of it All.

I recall the Host rebelling against God and dividing into armies. It was a war of conquest, of ultimate power and control over a reality, which had been destroyed and remade a thousand times over. Each time, it had failed, and the mortal cattle that lived there self-destructed after a few billion years.

I never understood the fascination with these limited creatures, but I understood being displaced. The fact that we had been shoved aside in His favor by creatures several thousand steps down on the evolutionary scale really pissed us off.

I was part of the rebel force. We followed the Morningstar when he stormed the gates of the Silver City. I was one of the lesser caste; the Cherubim. History would tell the tale that we were easily swayed by Lucifer and his promises of glory and restoration of our rightful place in Heaven – by God's side.

I guess they were right. Looking back on it now, storming the gates of the city of the Creator of All Things really seems like a pretty stupid idea. Perspective changes everything though, and at the time, we were sure we would end up on top.

In the end, Michael and the other Archangels overwhelmed us and cast us out here, to Earth. No fire and brimstone for us. Truth be told, I would have preferred that. Instead, we were exiled to this stinking, lump of mortal refuse.

We were transformed, and forced to move among the mortal beasts to learn about them so that we might better understand them. They're all about rehabilitation, that lot. It still makes me chuckle.

Perhaps if we had been allowed to keep our forms and interact with these creatures, things would have worked out alright. But we weren't. They disfigured us, transformed us from pure light and formlessness, to foul and twisted creatures that existed just outside the mortal creature's ability to perceive.

Not exactly fair, if you ask me.

Demons, the world would call us forevermore. This age of Man especially has written volumes of lore about us, most of it inaccurate. But there are those who have gotten it right. There always is, in every incarnation of this filthy mudball.

Another one of His jokes – this time on the mortals. Give some of them the ability to see and talk with us, and the rest turn on them and lock them up. Asylums were always such fertile hunting grounds. They can see us there – and its always better when they scream.

But, the intersection of those who can see us with those who cannot of course gives birth to legend and myth. Most mortals wonder if demons truly exist or not.

I assure you, we do.

I slowly come to a gentle stop directly over a 1974 Chevy Impala sitting at a red light. Inside, a thirty eight year old Carpenter waits for the light to turn green. A delicious sort of thrill ripples through me as I consider the irony of the man's profession.

I wonder if he knows I'm there? He seems to begin to daydream just as I take notice of him. Perhaps he feels as if he's being watched.

He is.

Suddenly I am inundated with information about the mortal thing I am gazing at.

The man in the car is called Jason Shutz. He's cheated on his wife with four different girls in the twelve years he's been married. A marginal alcoholic, he's got three kids to support, and he does shoddy work for highly inflated prices (of which he only reports maybe 60% of to the IRS).

Still, not a bad guy. At least, not as bad as what I was when I was one of them. Not yet, anyway.

At last I feel mobility bleed into my form. I can control my movement now. I feel an imperative to enter the creature, to join with it. For the first time since this joyride started, I think I can change the direction of my movement. I slide through the roof of the Impala and turn my consciousness so that I would be staring him right in the eyes.

The small brownish marbles are empty – completely bereft of a healthy spirit. Good. I can fill him right up. I go right in through the nose....

Jason Shutz waited for the light to change, when all of a sudden he caught a glimpse of movement in his rear view mirror. He glanced directly into it, but saw nothing. It was late. He was seeing things.

A dull throb began at the bridge of his nose and he felt something trickle down his lip. He tasted a warm, salty liquid as he realized his nose was bleeding. “Ahh, dammit,” he said and flipped his directional on, driving his car out of the line waiting for the light and parking it at the curb. Slamming the car into ‘park’, he leaned over and reached into his glove box to see if there were any Dunkin Donuts napkins or anything to stop the bleeding.

The glove box had no gloves at all in it, in fact contained nothing but his registration and proof of insurance card. “Dammit,” he said.

As he sat back up and looked again into his rear view mirror, something changed. His eyes were more alert. More awake. Different. They held power, even he could see that...command. He was – transformed in the space of a few heartbeats from poor, pathetic Jason Shutz to – something else.

The blood suddenly tasted good in his mouth. He liked the coppery, salty taste and he snaked his tongue out to dart up and get a little more. That was good. That was very good. But that was just the beginning.

A craving inside him began to tug at him urgently. He needed more than just a *taste* of blood. The blood was only the fluid that lubricated the bag of rotting meat that was his body.

But inside, protected by cages of bone, were meaty treasures that he knew he simply must sample. There was where the power truly lay. To get the power, he must feed. And to feed, he needed suitable food.

His breathing grew rapid, his mind raced. He knew then he had to get home. His family was waiting, and he was so damn hungry...

###