

As I walk through the gray and damp
The sun, behind steel, flickers like a lamp
Step after step sinking into deep dark pools
Destroyed corporations to my left, to my right--eviscerated schools.

Murky puddles and melted rust
The dim remains of unquenched war lust
As Tartarus looks down on us from above
No single shining flake is showered of love.

Instead, thick ashes reign
Bringing down dusty pain
And as that smoke stings my lungs
I grip orange ladder rungs.

Upwards I pull myself above this scape
Ascending from the thermonuclear rape
Hand over hand, foot over foot
My palms grow black with human soot.

A creak and metallic groan as I near the top
But nightmares linger below, no time to stop

With one final heave, I break free
And stand atop a skyscraper, with all to see.

Slowly I drag my tired eyes across the land
What previously occupied human shapes—now sand
I feel the morbid grit on my palm
Causing my mind to race as all is calm.

Towering terrors loom into the sky
Like ribs out of grass not answering why
Thanatos's mean grim glows true
As the world is enveloped in orange hue.

It all slides down my throat, hard to swallow—my lithium
Sending me deeper and deeper into everlasting delirium
The city itself seems to scream out
Its cause of death leaves me no doubt.

And as I fall to my knees in awe
I hear, far away, the black crow's caw
It soars in the air as a beacon of hate
The scavenger dove, as of late.

But it has nowhere to nest, not glen nor glade
Not a morsel of meat, just a hydrogen-shade
All around, on the remaining walls
The outline of a friendly ghost falls.

It looks like my own, and I reach out,
Connecting with nothing that I'll ever know about
Standing as a monument to our sins
Carved into the side of white trash bins.

Alas, the mist around me is of vermillion hue
Renewing my drive—to start anew
Turning to the ladder, I start my descent
Relinquishing the freedom, of which I have been lent.

But as I shift from rung to rung
My world—it flips like the chameleon's tongue
And like its coat, my view shifts
Instead of dipping down, my world, it lifts.

With renewed vigor I climb and climb

Leaving behind me metal covered in rime
A warm breeze brushes against my cheek
The beauties I behold, of which I cannot speak.

My voice clogged by that hateful dirt
Proving my speech to be inert
They swirl around me, sirens of light
And assist me in my fearful flight.

Zig-zagging scions of fluorescence
Bath my world in luminescence
Gorgeous flows of white and gold
Gilded to their skin like crowns of old.

One reaches out with her hand to me
And cures my sight, allowing me to see
Her Augustan frame shrivels to black
My cursed eye turns to a cataract.

But blinds me not, as one may think
It clips for me a missing link
Her oil-black dress on her skeletal frame

A gaping maw splits open, “From whence you came.”

Suddenly I plummet to the death and ash

Scars left by a depleted weapons cache

The pitch consumes me—a horrid tar

How I wonder—have I come this far?

This never ending free-fall shakes my soul

And I mourn to see another knoll

Below me sits a bloody lake

Mounds of bodies in my wake.

With a sudden impact, and a scarlet flash

I hit the water with a hellish splash

My bones chill to the core

As I plunge deep into the gore.

Soon my vision goes from red to black

The reality hits me like a thunder-crack

With the edge of my foot, the bottom I touch

And I choke on the fluid, just as such.

Repentance is clear as the prawn's shell
When you find yourself a pawn in your private hell
The toll of a bell, the strike of a clock
The crack of a whip, the tick and the tock.

In my place, I find that time keeper
Cast of silver, tomb of the reaper
Outstretches her hand, gnarled twisted
On her manifest of souls, I find myself listed.

My hand in hers, I step through the port
And enter a realm of no other sort
Trees above me bend and break
I find in front of me, a wooden stake.

Clenched in a fist, I lift the vampyric bane
Turning to my captor, obedience I feign
But then with one swooping blow
I strike her fast, hard, and low.

She lets me slip, just for a minute
But long enough to run, to begin it

Such a startling screech—I've never heard
A deathknell not fit of man, woman, or bird.

Sprint through the dusk, through the Dark Wood
On my tail howls a daemonic flood
Over branch, log, and rushing stream
I skip like a doe on a balance beam.

The harpies take note, and leave their Yews
Footprints behind me are the only clues
And yet they beat their wings in chase
Slowly advancing on me in this race.

A light flickers true, at the end of the Err
Their nails rip into my flesh—my world a blur
I break free bloodied and torn
My eyes stinging like a newborn.

And ahead of me the siren floats
Beckoning me to coves and shimmering côtes
Her knowledge of my treachery full

I step forward, with my brain dull.

Trusting her to hold me true

Trusting her descent from the blue

Hoping her doll skin turns not to slate

Her eyes beckoning me—an ethereal bait.

The soft grass below me feet and between my toes

I lift my shoulders, and my confidence grows

My chin held high, I go to greet her

An old friend...a radiant creature.