

monument

Death is just another night.

That's what I remembered – with the end of that, comes the end of this; no fucking around. I've been fucked around, for sure. This, right now, is being fucked around.

I was lied to.

Socrates laid out the options; one a deportation, the other a complete cessation. But this is neither. If *this* is what it even is. I'm not sure anymore. Another night? Another night would hold promise. And be filled with excitations of the retinae and the cacophony of barely audible sounds. Even nightmares.

I

I recall columns of white with the texture of cake, and hands that were severed but never bled – I recall a hillock of sand with grains that shone, rolling into the base of a purple sky. The Parthenon, the Lapiths of Thessaly, the words of Pausanias.

I recall...

Death is just another night. Nothing else. It's just another night. There may have been all those days, but it all ends in night. Or, so it seems, *begins* in night. Begins and rattles on. Or something similar. So it seems. 'Seems'.

I'm not sure it makes sense now, *seems*. I don't have use for the word. Nothing *seems* to me.

Someone talked of seeming, of seeming and being:

*'It is possible that to seem—it is to be,
As the sun is something seeming and it is.
The sun is an example. What it seems
It is and in such seeming all things are.'*

It's all I have – this seeming; if there was ever a sense of something there, beyond, then I as sure as shit have lost it. As long as I keep this up, I'll go on. I am continuous with my plight. I am stuck and doomed to repeat or to... what? What shit.

What a crock of shit. As if it was as easy as all that. I can't just...

II

I recall a backdrop of wooden arabesques, and around me bloodshot eyes. The dust kicked up and out, beyond the tangle of heads. I recall a donkey bray – it jolts – and whatever the hell it was I felt here, now there, and coming back near with claws, eagle claws. I recall music and the shuffle of raffia, the barren banks of the Ogowe, the unflinching faces of the Ngil.

I recall...

How did I feel?

I don't know, but it was never as easy as all that. As just will and sheer belief. The need to go on, and all that. It was complex. What did I used to say?

'Don't become complacent about complexity. Be melancholy. It elevates the dark with a touch of poignancy, and textures apparent happiness with a tug of regret'.

If only I'd known. It really was even simpler than that. There is no happiness or darkness, just another night. Another night. '*A perpetual anguish of the soul, fastened on one thing, without an ague.*' Aretaeus, I believe. Bang on. Bang on you prick. No fucking ague. There's something, there's something; there's something else...

III

I recall beautiful black and white, bent by the echoes of brass. Contortions of the arthritic body, bass tones and that rib. One broken rib, a gesture. Close bodies again, and the beat of the show.

Let it ring on.

These drips are skin, and the heat from exhausts. A parade, a ritual, a beating of the drum. High from the car fumes and cheap speed, they press against the stickiness that perverts the soft curves, not yielding, but firm. The sheen and glitter under streets and strobes. I recall the tenements of Moss Side, the patches of blood and tarmac in Lancashire or Yorkshire, and the pitch black Tees studded with flame.

All this I recall with about as much clarity as... well, as much as that.

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It isn't enough to scream, or to remain silent. What does memory, the monument, hold? What do I channel? What is my being and my seeming?

If I have seen everything, and it comes back round – another turn of the wheel – what then? In that horrendous doubling, that frightful repeat, I might find relief. The monument becomes a symbol of everything we wish to forget, for fear of choosing identity over experience. Being over seeming.

IV

A folded hand breathes soft life into a fortuitous bird. I expect a silent massacre. Ashen remains resist a heavy

wind, and my cheeks are hot with blood or fire. Hammer nail, hammer nail. A distant bugle.

In such seeming all things are.

I recall spheres.

I'm a visage.