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Second Chance

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SECOND CHANCE

Tim Emmerling

The anguish of the city was ejected into the sky as long puffs of black gaseous digestion. These infinite trails of smog infused the air with their own blend of defecation and never ceased to offer breathing beings the utmost noxious inhalations. The sky was burnt and beyond healing.

In the beginning, the sun tried to climb above and persevere by shedding its arms across the trapped humanity below. But its miniscule photons were hastily consumed by the plaguing darkness. One day, it was as if the sun gave up altogether. The heat was present, but days remained murky under the grimy sky.

The pot-holed roads were over-populated with expensive image enhancing cars. This over-populated the economy with debt, which over-populated the streets with drugs and other types of dishonest markets. Jails became over-populated.

It was a city built upon a misunderstanding of right and wrong, good and evil, and justice and injustice. Though the government still fed the neediest with handouts, there was little appreciation for brotherhood among fellow men. The understanding was very simple. Those that stood together remained at the bottom, or fell deeper into the abyss, doing whatever it took to survive. Divided, those with talent and strong stride rose to the top above all other failures. This was the division of class.

Civilization continued day to day without ever having an admiration for tomorrow.

Breathing the charcoal scented fuel, John Doe stands atop the ledge of the bridged overpass staring down at the scorned Earth below him. In the midst, he

watches as others dressed like him gather around the limited warmth of the small fire. The passing breeze is cold underneath their tattered rags and it carries the scent of burning garbage within its limits.

As his intoxicated mind distorts his view to its own liking, each step becomes progressively difficult to complete across the narrow surface. Passing cars are quick and apathetic to the suicidal position that John has placed himself in. Law officers are nowhere.

The empty bottle escapes John's left hand and plummets off of the bridge. It shatters to pieces eventually, but the sound is faintly heard amongst the traffic conditions. Then, unbeknownst to him, John loses his balance and begins to lean over the bridge. For the timing, he laughs drunkenly, but in a moment, he'll be splattered all over the ground.

His arms search through the open air for something to break this fall, but there is nothing. Head first, his body goes into a state of free-fall. Gravity grips him at the waist and ignorant to his fragile structure, it pulls him down at the incapable speed. He enjoys the fast-paced excitement of his senses.

Nearing the ground, the alcohol is smeared from his understanding, and he realizes what's happening. It's too late now.

His glass-like body is introduced to the overpowering ground forcefully, and his carnal features scatter to get better acquainted with newly created cracks and crevices. John Doe lays shattered across the paved grave as sets of eyes graze the mess nonchalantly.

As the broken body lay with arms spread randomly, an ethereal form exits through the already decaying skin. The translucent specter that was John Doe stared down at the body and recognized it without mistake. It stood above the bag of dead flesh looking down in confusion for a moment, but then reality set in; he was dead.

This spirit looked up to get a view of the bridge, but its glassy eyes were filled with a flash of light coming from above. It tried to block the penetrating beams with its slightly visible arms, but it was no use. The apparition began to ascend up towards the light.

He watched as his decimated body, the beggars around him, and civilization grew smaller and smaller. It was at one point when he could fit the entire city inside the circle he created with his thumb and fore-finger. Continually floating higher, he combed the sky for a white cloud, but there were none in sight. They were all trampled on by the dark disgust.

At last, when he couldn't see the details below him anymore, he looked up to the great beyond. With one final flash of light, he exited this world. The grayish see-through appendages dissipated as if burnt in the flash, and there was nothing left by the time it was over.

The gravel at his back dug itself into his shoulders and he re-awoke to the chemical breath around him. He was back in the trash heaped capillary of the city, and nothing had changed.

He was barely clothed, the cars continued to buzz by carelessly, and the bums still stirred below. The deafening light had commanded him to return and

to give existence another chance. He had done nothing with his life, it said. It begged him to do something with himself, and to change a rotting system.

He wasn't given a choice in the matter.

But the city was filled with people unwilling to change. They were all just drones. Whether they enjoyed their time in this life, or not, they were too lost in their day to day dealings to see the corruption encompassing them. Reality filled him quickly.

John Doe stands atop the ledge of the bridged overpass staring down at the scorned Earth below him. In the midst, he watches as others dressed like him gather around the limited warmth of the small fire. The passing breeze is cold underneath their tattered rags and it carries the scent of burning garbage within its limits....

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