

# Humanity

By Carson Webb

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What do you do when the things you cherished greatly in your life are taken away? Shock, anxiety, separation...

*"It's just time to go our separate ways."*

I couldn't believe that she was actually going to walk away from me. I was angry and confused, but much more just hurt. She had been one of the greatest impacts on my life over the last four years that I had known her. That's right, four years; plenty of time to get acquainted and then some. She was not only a mentor and life coach to me—she was like an older sister; the influence she held on me was huge.

*"Yes, she is really going to leave you."*

I was stunned when God confirmed that to me. I thought maybe I could sort it out, correct the misunderstanding—the more I tried, the worse it got. Hurtful words and blame volleyed both directions. I just couldn't believe it, I didn't want to believe it! I didn't want God to take her away, but I knew it was going to happen, because he said it would.

*"All I wanted was to tell you about it."*

I had just come back home from a life-altering experience with God and I was more than enough ready to make up for my wrongs. I was so excited to tell her about my experience, to celebrate with her about what God had done in my life, but instead I came back to hurt and judgement. From the friend who had walked with and encouraged me to go to eternity with God came condemnations for self-righteousness and piety. All I wanted to do was tell her about it.

*"God I've already lost a friend!"*

She was the second I had parted ways with that very month, both quite close friends, though my friendship with her had been much longer. I couldn't understand why God was doing this, and now, at a time when I had become distant to a lot of lesser friends, why did this happen?

*"You wouldn't have done it otherwise."*

I always heard that some friends are only meant to be together for a season, but when the season was over, I didn't want to let go. It didn't seem like a right way to separate ways. But several weeks later God explained why it had to be that way. He called me to chase after him. Sometimes we cross paths with others on the same journey, but he called me to chase Him. It was time to continue on to another season in my life, a season where some people could not follow, but I wouldn't have been able to let go of those people on my own.

*"If I could go back in time..."*

It didn't have to end like that, we always say 'If I could go back in time and do it again...' I wish I could go back and do it again, at least make things right before God led her out of my way. But the past is the past and cannot be changed. This winter

[2010] would have been four years since we met, I don't regret any other time with her over the three-and-a-half years we shared. I wish that somehow, we could have remained together as friends, but I hold to the hope that what now is will not be forever. For now, all I can say is "Fare well, Sister..."

*"Farewell."*

Humanity – Carson Webb

*“Much of the evil in the world is due to the fact that man in general is hopelessly unconscious.” -Carl Jung*

*Humanity* - Hopeless, yet inextricably and mysteriously apprised. She is a roving source of the greatest Evil and yet the focus of the greatest Good. Where did we come from? Why are we here? And what is our purpose, if any more than to eat, drink and be merry? We are the Lady Simplicity—the ultimatum of sophistications. Our lives are such of great paradoxes, and often contradiction; but humanity is also a people of great beauty should we choose to journey within ourselves and discover it.

Amoral? Certainly not. Evil? Of a certain and distinct nature, for many would reason that hell is a place within every man. But Good? Only inasmuch as we can fight the will of this evil nature within each man.

Although this collection is primarily built upon fictitious happenings, I cannot overstate the supremacy of the truths which I laboured over each piece in order to bring to light. And it is the simple truth which I find most paramount in this description of man within his world of follies and deceptions. It is these truths which lead us to those scattered and sacred moments, each in which we achieve another small discovery of our Self.

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## He Left His Gun at the Door

It had been a terrible long winter. The snow had come early and left late and the flowers were not yet budding from the barren land, still locked in frost as it was. And then there was *he*. George still recalled the many dark nights when the wild noises of parties had drifted across the fields, and he had followed them to the source, loaded shotgun in hand to send the revelry home. There had been many such nights, and he always knew who he would find at the centre of it all. Amidst the bottles and broken glass, that woebegone wretch was his brother; flesh of my flesh, blood of my blood.

He never understood it; he lived alone on the far side of a hundred-acre lot, his brother on the other. He rarely kept visitors; his brother rarely kept loneliness. And he hated it—hated him. Childish bitterness? Maybe. Jealousy? Perhaps—his brother had always stood over him with a shadow to suite, and that woman!—but all the same it made him sick. It made his stomach wretch and his gut twist for mere thinking of it, that...that man over there in his two-hundred-grand house keeping company with only the richest and rattiest. And then there was that one night...

He had retired to his bed early, having to wake before the sun the next morning to drive into town for work. He had nearly succeeded but the heavy bass of the night life began drifting through the still air from the west. He tried to ignore it, oh yes he did his best, but it was inevitable. He clamoured from his bed of unrest, fitting his feet into the slippers next to his bedside and shuffling to the door to take down the 12-gauge shotgun from the hooks above the door of his little single-room house. On the porch he traded his slippers for his big orange rubber boots—quite a sight to match his nightgown and greying hair beneath his long-tailed nightcap. He stormed out to the rusty old truck parked in the driveway and checked behind the seat for extra rounds before hanging the shotgun on the rack behind him and revving the engine to life.

The drive was jammed up with vehicles and every light in the house was on. The noise of the music was deafening here. He grabbed the shotgun and the box of rounds from the glove compartment and loaded the firearm like a mad man. He stormed toward the steps but before reaching them he stopped to fire off the gun into the air—an ear-splitting boom which was immediately followed by the music being stopped. He could see the guests peaking out from the corners of windows, but they were not why he had come.

“Connor!” it was to the house that he shouted, but for a moment nothing but silence replied. And then the front door banged open and a man—the man—raged from the house onto the front steps.

“I’m sick and tired of this George, get the hell off my property and away from my house!” Connor—the wretch of a brother—raged.

“Turn the damn noise down! You’ve kept me up every night this week!” George replied angrily. “I can’t stand it any more!” But George didn’t see the .45 Connor gripped at his side till the loud report and the round struck the ground not five feet to his left.

“Bastard!” George flew into a rage and the shotgun went off again—luckily for Connor his anger skewed his aim and both shots passed above and to the left of his head.

By now the house had been vacated via the rear door and the guests had begun driving away as fast as the rutted road would allow. Connor fired off several more warning rounds over George's head followed by George making splinters of the support beam at the edge of the porch which Connor had just been standing next to, having moved when he saw the shotgun raised again.

"To hell with you!" George screamed, "You're going to kill me!" he turned and stormed back to his truck, the party having been sufficiently broken up by the rave outside. That was the last night he had seen his brother; the next day the house had been boarded up, padlocked heavily and vacated. He knew not why or for how long; all he knew was that Connor was gone—and he was glad.

\* \* \*

Well the days went by and soon the days became weeks, weeks became months, months became years, and still the house on the other side stood empty save a caretaker who came by once or twice a month. But he was not bothered. Finally his small corner of the world was silent and his peace went undisturbed. And it had been three years and he alone remained. Yet even in this state of secluded equilibrium he could not help but feel every once and again the pang of regret, though he never could recognize it truly for what it really was. It was merely a strange feeling which twisted his gut and wrenched his head to aching. And for all this time he passed it off as a poorly digested steak or a lamb shank.

And one day he simply did not get out of bed, so severe was this sickness. He called in sick to work and spent the better part of the day in a dreadful fit-filled sleep in which he continually awoke time and time again in a severe sweat. And by evening he had not improved, and around about supper time there came a knock on the door—his door. He heaved himself from the bed and shuffled his tormented body toward the door. It seemed a mile away but he finally reached that wooden portal to the world without and with a great effort he heaved it open. But here was the most unseemly sight; on the step was nothing but a pure white envelope; no one in sight, not even a car hurrying away along the rutted road. He bent down—though his limbs ached with every move he made—and he picked up the envelope. The outside was blank, bearing no mark of any kind. His fingers pricked when he touched it.

Supper was bubbling away on the stove; for the first time all day he felt an appetite roaring in his tormented stomach. The envelope hadn't moved from where he had dropped it suspiciously on the table, but now he realized he had no choice but to open it. He removed the hunting knife from his belt and picked up the envelope to slit the seal. It cut easily, no differently from what he had expected. Within the paper folds was a single piece of paper no bigger than the envelope itself. All it bore was an address; no name, date, or message, just an address. And he knew whose it was, and he knew what he must do.

\* \* \*

The house was adequate; not overly expensive but certainly not shabby. A silver BMW was parked in the driveway. The exterior design of the residence certainly reminded him of that three-story pearl on the far side of his hundred acres and he knew he had been lead to the correct place, his stomach beginning to churn once again. He removed



that old scratched shotgun from the rack behind him and checked the rounds. He took one more heart-lurching breath and opened the door, stepping out onto the warm pavement. Nervously slinking up the walk toward the house—like a dog running away, tail between his legs—his heart shrunk back with every step; he wanted to turn and run. Imagine, a grown man with a 12-gauge shotgun turning to run—and from what; a memory? By the time he had reached the door it was all he could do to keep himself from making a hasty break for his truck. He could not even bring his hand to knock on that pure white door or touch the bell.

And so he stood there for what seemed an eternity, letting the battle rage within his heart, one half of him willing his legs to turn and retreat to the safety of his hundred acres now far behind, the other only just staying the urgings and impulses of his muscles. But finally he had to do either one or the other, and he did one. He turned—slowly at first so as not to seem too hurried or eager to leave—and returned to the forsaken safety of the rusted Ford. He hung the gun back up on the rack—he did not even know why he had brought it—and slumped down in the driver’s seat. It was then that there on the dash the envelope which had brought him on this venture caught his eye, and he knew only one thing he could bring himself to do. He removed the paper from the envelope and taking a pen from the glove compartment, he began to write on the back. He returned to that white-wash door and, placing the paper back in the envelope, slipped it under the door.

\* \* \*

It had been near a year now and he had dismissed entirely the slip of paper. All that had come, months later, was a stiff, awkward phone call from his brother with as few words as possible to say all was forgotten. It had seemed strange, but now all *had* been forgotten—or at least, passed into the back of the mind. But there came a day that brought it forward once again.

It was a bright spring morning and the 5 AM shadows were still creeping their way toward 6 AM. Lights began to appear in the now run-down lot across the hundred-acre; some life began to appear. All that morning there was a bustle, and when George went to work that morning there was that silver BMW parked next that symmetrical stone walkway. He shrugged off the uneasiness in the pits of his belly and continued about his way to town. It certainly appeared to be permanent.

The next few days he spent in almost terror of what had come upon him. Already the lawns across the way had been cut, the windows un-boarded, the curtains thrown back to let in the golden light—even a curl of grey smoke had begun in the stone chimney. Life had returned to the far side of the acreage, and still he waited.

\* \* \*

There came an evening when he looked out across the acreage and there was a white car bumping along the road leading to that abominable house. *Here it comes.* He thought. *Nothing has changed.* He went to the door and took down the 12-gauge, checking the ammunition. Better to make an end now before it got any worse. He pulled on his big boots and rested the shotgun on his shoulder, leaving the house in disgust. He climbed into his pickup and bumped across the barren field.

Though not a grain of wood had changed, the house seemed especially imposing. He took the gun from the rack—almost an impulsive action now—and stepped from the truck. Shouldering the firearm he warily climbed the step and hesitating a moment, rapped a timid knock on the door. It wasn't loud but he imagined the whole house echoing with the noise, such was it built. He waited a moment; silence. Then light footsteps echoing behind the door, and the knob began to turn.

A young blonde-haired woman looked out from behind the door—not that terrible woman that had lived with Connor here before in another life, but another. She only opened it a crack—far enough to see out—the chain behind holding it fast. He was startled and so was she, but she held her composure well for one who had been approached by a mountain man with a 12-gauge shotgun.

“He’s been waiting for you,” she said, a note of caution still in her voice.

“Waiting?” George was somewhat taken aback. “For me?”

“Yes... I’m Alexandra, Connor’s fiancée,” she said, and he heard the sound of the chain scraping from its catch. “Please, come in.” She opened the door wide and stepped back, revealing a short, woodworked hallway within. He could now see her complete frame and she was as petite as her soft voice, yet her eyes and her form showed an incomprehensible boldness. “He will see you in the sitting room,” she said, and gestured for him to follow her. He left his gun at the door.

It was high summer and the apple trees were ripening their fruit. Yes, it had been a long winter, a terrible long winter. But the snow had vanished and the spring sun had unlocked the frost from the ground. And he left his gun at the door.

## The Last Hiding Place

*He* was in a rage again, and *he* was searching—and they knew it. A hiding place must be found before they themselves were found by him. They had already searched out the lower floors of the antique dwelling. Outside? Far too much open space - there was no place to hide but within the old walls. The bedrooms? No, he surely would find them there. No closets, no cabinets, no out-of-the-way hallways or rooms. The only options left lay up the stair on that dismal, far-off top landing, and oh what a stairway, and oh what a landing. But he was coming ever closer, so near now they could almost feel his hot breath upon their necks, trick of their minds though it be.

Through the aged house they ran, around the clutters and through the narrow spaces where furniture was overcrowded, right to the foot of that cedar stairway. And with little hesitation they scrambled up it—four little feet on the stair—for he was coming, and they *must* find a hiding place. To that pale-green carpeted landing they raced, but which way? Where could they hide? To the right and in all the bedrooms and closets they ran and searched, but not a place could they find. Now they could almost hear the echoing of his footsteps on the first floor. Run they must! Run to the left! Search in all the bedrooms, in all the linen closets! Not a hiding place to be found! And now he was on the stair coming heavily on, feet pounding out his rage.

And then to the loft they ran; naught but a space of attic behind a tiny locked door, and oh what a small door to duck through. And on the other side they shut it fast—as fast as it would shut—and bolted it firmly. Here they huddled, four little feet. There was a great torn opening in the shingled roof, and some floor boards were missing, and now he was calling, “Children, oh children!” and they did not answer. “Where have you hidden yourselves?” in that sort of voice which is comical and sarcastic to veil the anger at being tried. And they made not one peep. And he was searching the bedrooms.

And to horror! Had the attic wall not been solid? For there were gaps in the paneling! Sight passed between to expose their hiding place. And terror of terrors! Had not the bolt of the door drawn tight? For now it hung loose. And this was the last hiding place, all others had been tried, all others now searched out, and *he* stood between them and the stairs. And he was enraged the more at the prolonged search. But it was no longer a search but merely a drawn out game of cat-and-mouse where the cat always wins.

Yes, he would find them. He would push open that tiny door—or break it down—so the bolt didn’t matter. And he would squeeze through that opening—or push the wall down—so his stature didn’t matter. And he would find them for certain now. He would find them there in the loft. No where left to run, no place left to hide; this was it, and *he* was coming.

## Musikverein

The sound of the classical orchestra filtering through the wall behind me added to my placid state. I pushed the last button through the corresponding hole in my white dress shirt and began tucking. It had been over a year now since I had last performed—since... Wiener Musikverein—and I had begun to be aware of how nervous I was. I tucked the last fold of my shirt in.

*I took a deep breath, anticipating the moment ahead of me. I sensed her approaching from behind me.*

*“You know I can feel you coming,” I said, grinning. Lucia’s mocked disappointment was obvious. We’d only been married a year, but I’d come to know the feel of her footsteps and the scent of her perfume long ago.*

*“Are you ready?” She wrapped her arms around me from behind in her delicate way.*

*“Do I look ready?” I asked, folding my collar and straightening the tuxedo over my shirt.*

*“You look magnificent,” she praised, “What does it take to get you to dress like this more often?” she teased. I shrugged. I’m not fond of suits; they’re simply impractical.*

*I inhaled deeply again, “I’m ready.” Lucia came around to my side and set a light kiss on my cheek.*

*“Good luck,”*

I remember the day I met her at a university musicians’ social. I could hardly stand the sound of her, always talking. Of course, our relationship didn’t stay that way for long; we fell in love within five years. Even my blindness of twenty years didn’t turn her off; I guess that means I must be good looking.

I shrugged the thoughts from my mind; I had enough on my mind to distract my performance tonight. I felt for the chair beside me and upon finding it sat down to draw my smooth, black dress shoes onto my feet. I could have tied my shoes with my eyes shut better than anyone else, but then again, it didn’t matter whether my eyes were open or closed. I sat a moment to relish the moment, the sound of the orchestra already on the stage. I couldn’t help but remember the last time I performed the piece I was preparing for.

*I’m certain I could hear her cheering and applauding the loudest of all from the edge of the stage, and I hadn’t even begun yet. I continued walking confidently across the stage, mentally reviewing; Thirteen steps forward, turn, short bow, twelve more steps to the piano. The music that night seemed to flow from my fingertips with an unusual ease—perhaps due to the adrenaline of being able to play in the classical music capital of the world. Deep breath, Pause, five seconds. I began playing up to the climax—*

I pulled myself back to reality; the memory was becoming all too real in my mind and I had to focus on the concert ahead of me. This certainly wasn't the Wiener Musikverein, but New York was big enough. Besides, after the effort my manager had put into getting me back on the stage I didn't want to let him down tonight by a scattered performance.

I stood up and felt inside the wardrobe for my tuxedo. Getting into all this fancy stuff didn't take me quite so long when Lucia was there to give me a hand, but certainly by now I was beginning to get the hang of doing it myself. Sometimes I would even put on a suit while I was at home. She never left my mind; it made me feel as though she were there with me again, applauding and cheering me on.

I finished buttoning the tux and turned, just as I heard my manager enter the room, "Looking good Steven, almost time for you to join the orchestra." I took a deep breath and took the five steps across the room to the stage door. My produce gave me a light clap on the back as the music quieted. The door was opened before me and I stepped out onto the stage. I knew the spotlight was on me six steps out onto the stage because the audience began to applaud; I didn't know then but they gave me a standing ovation. "*Five more steps, three to the left,*" I found the piano and waited as the audience quieted, then I began.

The music was beautiful, yet every note stung the full of my being as the memories knifed their way to my heart. The orchestra came in slowly, following me. A tear came from somewhere within and wet my cheek, but I kept playing. The music peaked and then I stopped. "*Eight beats...*"

I started into the soloing climax and with a rush and a surge suddenly the wall I had been building for weeks in advance was broken and the vivid memories filled my head—the crisp air, Lucia's dancing voice as she hurried across the street toward the car—it all came. The screaming of brakes and tires on pavement and the dull thud and breaking glass was perfectly vivid in my mind—the warmth seeping in a pool across the street. I held my composure.

*I had made it. The concert hall had emptied and Lucia took my hand as we walked victoriously toward the building's main entrance. Somehow she had convinced me not to change back to my casual clothing. "You were great tonight," Lucia was always complimenting and encouraging me.*

*The main doors squeaked open—you would've thought that in the Musikverein the doors wouldn't squeak so—and we stepped out onto the street, her small hand gently on my arm. The cool air came refreshingly to my face after being in that packed concert hall. "Wait here I'll get the car," she said as she let go of my arm. I heard her footsteps hurrying off toward the street. I waited, listening to the bustle of late-goers leaving the hall, the orchestra packing up.*

*The next moment was never to leave my memory; I heard brakes and tires squealing on the pavement, a scream and a dull thud, breaking glass—silence; Lucia. I ran blindly out into the street and stopped when I reached the car. Impulsively I knelt down and felt Lucia lying there, still. Warmth flowed on the pavement. They told me that night she was hit by a drunk driver, killed nearly instantaneously. I had wept for hours.*

I was coming to the dénouement and the music was fading. I had made it once again, but there was no familiar victory cheer from the sidelines. And it was now that I realized that while I have spent much time hiding from the stage—and even the piano in my home—it was as though I had killed myself with her. But now I faced it all head on—and I had come through. I had raised myself as it were, back from the dead—or had she? At that moment I could almost hear her voice from the edge of the stage, the familiar rhythm of her applauding hands above a thousand others. I had overcome that which I most feared. With a rejuvenated energy I finished my piece; this was for her.

## Brutality

The battlefield is a tangled chaos of twisted souls. In an active movement the gunfire never ceases for breath and the booming of artillery shells is forever in the heads of all. The battle is a colossal and vicious brute, rearing his ugly head to roar into every ear of the world around him, battering the Earth into submission. There is only one enemy; inhumanity. The din shatters the ear and pounds at the physical mind. Crying and screaming from man and beast fill the air if perchance the overpowering clamour of the assailing monster should pause even a moment.

You are waiting silently in the trench. At any moment that whistle may blow calling you to hurtle yourself as quickly as you may over the top and into the new world marred by the behemoth. Your comrades are beside you at the ready. After the last of breath is held the cry of the whistle is heard. Everyone running; craters and hills which have only just sprung from the earth in the wake of the bombardments provide protection for but a moment. Your objective is cover—staying alive to last the breath of the beast. The friends you made but a day before are being gunned down even as you rush on. Why are you the one that is missed? Why is it your fate that the rage of him should not strike you down?

The third wave of bombs and artillery is beginning as the monster lifts his mighty cry once more in eternal rage. The enemy lines are scattered and you rush forward with fresh energy, as if to charge directly into the waiting and hungry mouth of the brute before you. The dust and smoke of the bombardment, like a blanket, provides the cover for which you long. The enemy is firing blind now, but fire they will without sights, and many still fall.

You rush on ever further forward, but oh the horror. Like flies your comrades are being swatted away. And now it is your turn. They say you never hear the bullet, but you do. It is an unmistakable cry above the rumble of the monster, and now you are violently taken to the dirt. You are bleeding out; bullets have torn apart your body. Explosions begin anew all around you. The retreating call is screamed. You are in terror now; you will be left behind, a fatality to the bloody games of the creature which man has made. The pool of young blood you lay in is your own - terror.

The world is fading quickly now. You are shaking and convulsing vehemently, clinging to every sector of life left within. You try to collect the spilling of your being back into yourself, but you are now only a hopeless mess of twisted body. You wish to see your family again; to see the Life awaiting you in the womb of her whom you left behind.

The behemoth takes you in his mighty grips and you wonder why it was willed that you should go this way. The next moment, all is still. The noise of the striving is drowned out by an impeccable silence; peace at last. The battle is over, and he has won.

## The Composed

Sun at my back the  
Night is gone and I  
Can't stay here no more  
Graphics slide into a  
Myriad of fondue with  
The dolphins flying through  
Crystal waves and sea urchins  
Smile from the  
Sandy ocean bottom

Glass shimmers and shakes  
And I am nowhere to be seen  
Aching skulls resonate  
Sunshine at my back  
Sunshine in my eyes and  
The blackness resides still  
Behind my eyes

I'm fine here  
No cares, no shade  
No shares, no shades  
And the clouds are closing in  
Night comes quickly and  
Pyramids in the sand glow  
Blue intensity and the  
Sky turns purple from the immense  
Hued saturation

Time slows down in an  
Outrage of butterflies that  
Haven't yet turned—just like I  
And  
One day the flowers bloom and  
Someday blood gulch is  
Made into reality

The highway travels on and on  
Forever connected  
Forever travelling  
Like stars and gazelles and  
Mental images that just  
Don't seem to leave my mind

And here I am again pouring  
Into the stream of surreal  
Intimacy of myself



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And all that I can see is  
All that I create

The fact is I'm  
Lost in a world where  
The only thing that's real  
Is the only thing that I  
Can't contrive or express  
The one thing that is  
Truly Impossible  
Exists reality in my world

And I find no ease till  
That one thing which is Impossible  
I have designed for myself  
A duplicate copy—a  
Fraud of the real Thing

The thunder of the  
Mountainous terrains rolls out but  
It isn't from the sky from  
Which it comes but  
From the ravings of my  
Tormented subconscious

And all that's left now is me  
And It  
The Impossible  
The Composer

## The Monster's Appeal

There is a beast in the mind. When all else is quiet he is a monster that craves attention. He will not be silent for even a moment, but screams and shrieks fill his mouth. He will climb from his prison and pound on the door of your inner will till the bolt is drawn from within. And with a thunder he will take control and nothing more will be said. My heart will follow for under the will it will go, and terrible things will be done in his name. Finally in a flood of ecstasy he is pushed to the door. Screaming and tearing at the walls he is forced out. But when he wakes again be wary; he will pound once again on the door. Revolution follows revolution; it is a vehement cycle of mind and will. Never will it end till a greater force rises to displace the beast.

The world is silent and all is still. But the monster is stirring and I am his prey. He is scratching the walls of his dwelling prison, searching violently for a foothold—and he has found one. His movements are subtle; his climbing is strategic and as he heightens so do I. And now there is nothing between; a foothold, another and another. He is coming nearer, and now he is beating at that door ever more mightily - full submission.

The bolt is drawn from the other side once again and he drives his head through the opening. His face is uglier than I remembered, but nothing matters now. I am not cowering any more. He drags me from the hold as if to gnash me with his teeth - ecstasy. In a crashing of elation it is over and he is dragged back into the pit from whence he came, leaving his chain of shame clanking from my neck. The revolution has completed one more vile turn.

A new day comes and he is scraping once more the walls. He is climbing again, up and up. There is no fight; I have neither the power nor the will. He is coming; further, faster, closer, nearer. I cannot hold him back; the door is bolted doubly in vain, for I am standing by to open it. The beast is here. He screams in rage to the closed door. I draw the bolts and there he is. He leaps and I cry out. He is the dragon and I am the man, but I am not the knight to slay him. In all my strength I can only fall on my face to plea a saving hand. And then the monster is wrenched back. My plight has been heard. By a mighty hand he is forced back into the prison and his retching is silenced in the dark of the hold.

But the door is not closed; it is left ajar. The Might which has saved is beyond; not pressing on the door, but waiting. I step to the door and chance an outward glance. He is there. I let the door swing of my accord, and the Presence which has banished the monster embraces my being. I have found true bliss.

## A Devil's Antics

Watching a battle, yet unable to partake beyond the aid of council - devastating. I watched you struggle and strive. I saw the weakness in your front lines and I watched the enemy approaching in the distance, dust rising from his dauntless tramping.

He is Behemoth and he is Leviathan; he holds the earth in his grips. His scales are plates of armour against the strongest attacks. His ravaging jaws are open and ready to devour any witless Unfortunate. He is Red Dragon Breath; ready to consume the Earth in his fiery fury. He comes relentless; he knows every weakness.

You're playing with a devil; I've tried to make you see. All the more you slit your wrists to tempt him in by the smell your blood. For a moment the roles were reversed, and you played with Death himself. To the last instant I tried to call you up from the field of battle, already running with your self-inflicted blood. But you did not heed, and the Devil came on.

Had I not been far from the battle I would have stood between—the oncoming beast in front and you behind—that I might take the blow. But I was far from you and could no more than watch the ugly fiend coming on. You were as one who has had too much wine, enflamed with the exhilaration of battle, drunk as a wretch.

The enemy came on you as a roaring lion, but he played deceptively as a lamb. He danced around you, and you in staggered bewilder were dizzied by his antics. I wept for you to see from your eyes, but it was too late. He leapt upon you and the kill began. You screamed but it was too late. I could not watch. He did as a bear does maul, and then he left you for dead, marred and wounded.

I came to your body, though the distance was far. You were lying in your field of brokenness nearly dead, wishing you could be. I cleansed and dressed the wounds, many as there were. I am disappointed—heartbroken—you did not listen to my plea, and now you have paid in blood and flesh.

You awaken to me; I am here, I have always been though I could not stop you. You are devastated; I knew the realization would come. The cycle has made another turn and you have been left desolate by the demons. I will carry you from the battlegrounds, but how long will be too long? How much will be too much? I cannot save you every time and one day that devil will destroy you. Turn away! Come away with me! Live to fight a different sort of fight! Live, die, breathe, break.

*"I got to see myself—Me in the mirror  
Is this the autographed face of a creation  
Or the twisted monster I've made myself?"*

## Tears

*"They say he kissed his thumb  
And with it made a dimple  
But I'm not that creature he formed anymore  
How could I be more?"*

*"Maybe I was once, that peice of beauty  
But this piece of beauty has created a feud  
A mural myself, but I've mixed the lines and colours"*

*"Beauty? Not this thing I've made  
The saddest thing is that I can be anything  
But now I'm not anything at all"*

-Autographed [C. Webb, 2011]

Crimson tears were all she cried. They fell to stain the dirty carpet of her room. It was all she could do to forget—or was she simply fighting the comfort of feeling? Her brother was dead. Her sister also; she died in her arms—the poor fragile thing. She had tried to stop them but in the end the only gain had been more scars, and blood which was not her own. And then they had raped her there in her sister's blood. Her father was beating her mother when he wasn't drunk, and beating her when he was. Her mother blamed her, continually reminding her that she had ruined this family and murdered her siblings. But she couldn't leave, and that's what no one understood; she just couldn't.

*I don't want to die—*

I want to feel alive.

Her eyes were dry and she wept all the more, the dirty-yellow streetlamp outside the window casting an ugly yellow glow onto the floor in front of her. Oh for just one touch of the cold moon. But there was nothing left now. She didn't want to die. She wanted to be alive. She had lived this way for as long as she could remember, sometimes living at home, sometimes on the streets, sometimes with her uncle who had damaged and taken her innocence almost as often as her own father had. She pressed the blade with a little more force and though she winced a little, the pain never lasted long. She was desperate; she needed to feel.

*I don't care anymore—*

No one even knows my name.

Humanity – Carson Webb

It was getting late—even for her. Sleep rested heavily on her tortured eyelids and threatened her waking conscious. But she wouldn't sleep, not now. She needed to wrap the inflictions she had opened. The blood had already begun to dry, she would do no more tonight, but had it ever felt good—relieving—fulfilling. Relief existed only in each cut. It didn't take long to wrap her arms. She ran her fingers over the bandages and the scars of various ages. She didn't care who saw anymore; no one even knew her name.

*Lauren—*

Show me your scars.

“April.” She started, hurriedly pulling the loose sleeves of her hoodie—a form of apparel Webster's still hadn't given the proper assertion to—down over the bandages and the scars. “Lovely April...” She was sitting in the middle of the floor facing the door, yet the speaker was behind her. She didn't turn around.

“But no one knows my name?” It was a question to herself and she only thought it, but the calm male voice from behind answered;

“I know your name.” Still she did not turn around, but subconsciously was glad for her hair which covered the scars across the back of her neck. “Lauren April Mason... Show me your scars.”

*I can't let you see—*

Then let me show you mine.

She turned around finally, slowly at first. He was kneeling but a few feet behind her, dressed simply in a light plaid long-sleeved button-up t-shirt, and weathered blue jeans. His skin was rough but his eyes were kind and something else—love? She had never seen eyes like that. “Show me your scars,” he repeated himself.

“I can't let you see,” she replied, pulling her sleeves down further. That look in his eyes, it went right through her, but she couldn't wear her scars in front of the one who Knew her name.

“Then let me show you *my* scars.”

*By my wounds Lauren—*

Not your own

Till now she hadn't taken notice of his hands, but now he moved them toward her, gesturing, and she couldn't help but be a little curious. There in the center of each palm was a deep piercing which may have gone even completely through his hands. And then she looked up to his face and saw now—though she had not before—the marks on his brow and the scars where the flesh had been torn away. And now he took her hand in his much larger and she felt the scar in his palm. And he brought her hand gently to his side and she felt the ancient wound there. He rested his hand on her shoulder.

“You're alive by *my* wounds Lauren... not your own.”

*You know my name?*

I created you.

“Who are you? How do you know my name?” she inquired, unable to take her eyes off the scar in his hand. “You don’t know me directly, but I’ve known you all my life—and it’s been a while,” He smiled warmly, and she thought she caught a comical twinkle in his eye.

“That doesn’t even make sense—you’ve got to be like thirty years older than me,” She thought he must be crazy.

“Not to you, but it’s true all the same,” And she knew it was. “I know all about you Lauren. I know your name because I created you.”

*I’ve seen everything you’ve done—*

Now let me see your scars.

She shrugged his hand off her shoulder. She’d heard things like this before growing up in Sunday school, but now she wasn’t sure what to think.

“Where have you been when I needed you? Where were you when my sister was dead in my arms and they came after me while I was still soaked in her blood? When I’m on the street? Where are you when Uncle and my—my father are...” he brought his finger to her lips in a gesture of silence,

“Whether you believe it or not Lauren, I’ve always been with you. I’ve seen every moment of your life from the time you were conceived to now. I’ve seen all the things that have inspired those wounds. I’ve seen everything you’ve done... now let me see your scars.” She turned around again to face the opposite wall. She wanted to—*maybe*—but she couldn’t. She wouldn’t be that weak.

*I just want to hold you...*

I just want to be held

“Lauren... let me heal your wounds. I mean only the best for you,” she glanced back at his face; his eyes were entreating—pleading with her to break—and she wouldn’t. How could she? Her only comfort, her only measure of being alive—of living—was the pain and the blood, and yet she was ashamed to stand before her creator with these selfish mutilations. How could she open them up? She couldn’t. “Stop fighting it Lauren. You are accepted the way you are—I accept you... I just want to hold you.”

“I just want to be held!” her will broke and she turned around. Tears like tiny crystals welled up in her eyes though she tried with a last standing effort to keep them back.

“Let them go Lauren, they are your healing.”

*I’m not just your creator—*

You’re my Father.

Humanity – Carson Webb

She fell on his neck; she couldn't help but. He embraced her, his huge arms encompassing her; she had never felt so safe. She clung to his neck and wept on his shoulder. It came hard at first; she wanted to fight it, to stop these tears, but the more that the warmth from his heart radiated into her, the less control she had.

"It's alright, let it all come out," his voice was even softer now in her ear, and the tears only came harder and more freely.

"Please don't leave me," she choked, the tears finally slowing a little.

"I will never leave nor forsake you, Lauren, my promise hasn't changed even in two thousand years," he soothed, "be still now." Her sobs slowed and she raised her head to meet his eyes with hers. "I'm not just your creator, Lauren..."

"You're my Father," she declared quietly and, "Okay... I'm ready."

*What about your scars?*

Forever

She slowly pulled back both sleeves of her hoodie to reveal the bandages and the scars. He stroked her black hair back from her face gently, revealing the countless marks of abuse.

"The men in your life have hurt you; your spine was out of place and would have caused you much pain because of what they did to you. It is better now," and she had felt the vertebrae coming together into their correct places once again. Lovely Lauren.

"Your healing begins," he said, "Your scars will heal—"

"What about your scars?" she cut him off

"My scars will never heal; they will remain forever, to remind you of my love for you—I do love you, Lauren." Forever? That meant forever loved. Forever.

*You're beautiful—*

Don't be ashamed any more.

He touched her arm, felt her scars. She wanted to pull it back, hide her shame within her sleeves. He laid his other hand on her shoulder,

"Stop fighting it. I accept you, Lauren. I accept you *with* your scars, new and old, self-inflicted and those given you by others. I made you. I never wanted this to happen to you, but I have a new body waiting for you without spot or blemish; the body I purposed you for." The tears began to seep from the corners of her eyes again, and he wrapped his huge, strong arms around her again. "You are safe. You are free. You are beautiful - don't be ashamed any more." She wept with full abandon, no desire left to control it. This was healing, this was life.

*Don't leave me alone!*

I never have.

She knew it. With him she felt it could be true; she *could* be beautiful, if not for these scars... but perhaps it was like he had said about his own. Perhaps the scars were only a reminder of what she had overcome; the healing that she had only begun. She

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could almost feel the shame melting away within her, and she was free. *Completely free!*

“It’s time for me to go. You *are* beautiful Lauren, my love makes you so. Remember that,” he said, lifting her head and stroking back the hair again from her small face. She looked into his eyes. Love emanated from those eyes.

“Please don’t leave me alone,” she pleaded. He smiled,

“I never have Lauren, not once.”

He was gone, and she only now noticed how much brighter the room had been while he was there. *I never have Lauren, not once.* Could it be true? And then, yes... She knew it was, just as she had known every word he had spoken was true. And she could almost hear his voice now,

“I’m always here with you Lauren,”

Always



Humanity – Carson Webb

## Afterwards

*“I do not know what I may appear to the world; but to myself, I seem to have been only like a boy, playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.” -Sir Isaac Newton*

Since her beginning humanity has striven to know herself, and to this day the members of her existence continue to search for the meaning of their place. A futile search? No. For whether the goal is met and significance is discovered, along the path of time there is to be found many wonders, beauties and rarities which are only to be found by him who seeks them out. Be it in the still and calm of a life of solitude, or the fast-paced freeway of the daily rat-race, there *are* these rare and beautiful moments to be found which speed each man on his way to discovery of himself.