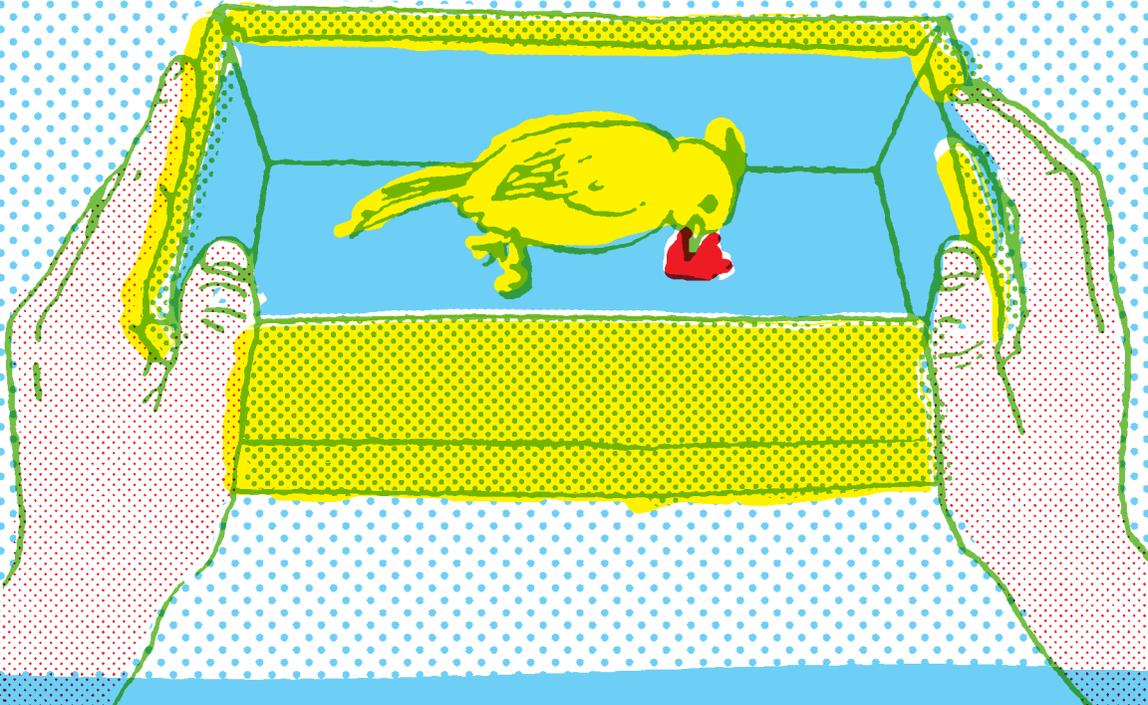


SELECTED EXCERPTS OF

A Survey of My Failures This Far

FROM THE LIBRARY OF
Gabriel Chad Boyer



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Act I

(A is sitting on a mound of people while throwing seeds in a bucket. There is a mound of rocks upstage to him, and a Narrator stands off to the left and behind him under a spotlight in poised contemplation. A continues to throw seeds for some time before B enters, while mound of people moans. Throughout rest of act, periodically mound of people will moan as group or individually to express an opinion or general dissent.)

A: How you doing?

B: Hello.

A: You passing through or do you plan to stop and wait awhile?

B: I haven't been anywhere all day.

A: Will you tell me where you're going then?

B: Home.

A: And where's that?

B: Haven't found it yet.

A: Quite a mystery, then. Aren't ya?

B: I'd like to think so.

A: Oh. You'd like to think so. Would you then? What's your name my

whipper snapping cudgel of a bean bag?

B: My name is written on the sleeve of my jacket so I won't forget it.

A: Is it cold where you live?

B: When I eat a lot.

A: Are you hungry right now, then?

B: Umm.

A: I have some seeds.

B: I don't like seeds.

A: They're good for you.

B: They give me gas.

A: You ever wonder whether you're gonna go just like a balloon, then?

B: What?

A: Die I mean.

B: I'd never thought about it just like that I suppose.

A: Got a doctor?

B: No.

A: You know. I could help you in that department if you wanted me to. I could.

B: You a dope fiend of some kind?

A: I could find that place to make you go tingle.

B: What good'd that do me?

A: Tingling is very important when you're all alone in the world and

have your name sown onto your sleeve so you won't forget it.

B: Do I need to make you see me or will you let me sit down while I bask in your glory?

A: Why don't you take your clothes off and stay awhile?

B: Goddamit. I need to know my name don't I?

A: Would you like a seed?

B: I need to leave.

A: *(A rises, then kneels, and mound of people breathes a sigh of relief.)*

The question is larger than three people can come to comprehend.

(B juts out hips and looks to left while sticking out tongue.)

It's for this reason that we're not gonna let go of anything we have found.

(B clenches fists and makes constipated face while semi-squatting in place.)

It is also for this reason that we are not gonna make it out of here.

(B opens mouth wide as if to laugh and jumps with arms pressed to chest, fists near neck.)

You see.

(A turns to B.)

We are in a laughing hyena right now and all we have left is our pillow to suckle on and without that we are nothing. Do you understand what nothing means? Nothing means that the greenery has grown clear or what we have when it's just our team of horses leading the way. Do you see? There's nothing but what I wanted from before, and nothing from where we got to go.

(B crinkles nose and rolls on ground. A turns back to audience.)

Going is coming around to something small. I want to fall into nothing because that is where I came from. And I want to be so much but all I am is some kind of voice in the ether and you are the land where nothing makes itself known, and you are where I'm going and we are not about to break free from our preconceptions and we are what we meant to make of it and we are going to make it again and once we do it'll be a special clash between the elderly and the collective.

(A hops back on mound of people who proceed to moan.)

I am a child.

B: *(Rising unsteadily from the floor.)*

I need to leave.

A: That's all well and good. But first you need to ask yourself before that answer of yours catches up and grabs hold before you know it it just might.

B: Will you just shut up already?

A: Grab a goat and make it sing I mean.

B: Am I just a pasture to you? Is that it? Somewhere for you to graze your greedy hands on?

A: You're a pounding on the door of destiny to me is what you are.

B: There are needs that must be met.

A: And there is a time when you'll come round to see the other side of this fine mountain. Now. Are you going to sit naked before me or shall I have to force you?

B: I don't think I get you at all.

A: You will. We all will someday.

B: What are you? Syphilis?

Candyland

1

My first mistake was to get involved with The House on the Hill. Before then I was an innocent stuck in solitude with only the periodic visits of a few zealots and the usual drop-off from the camp of Colby Sheffield to get me through the night. Before, I would go for midnight walks past display windows shut down, their manikins lost in shadow, pointer finger and thumb pinched. However, I was being followed by creatures from the deep even then, whether I spoke of it or not. Then the ground fell out and I was gone.

I came to this town cause of a call from a brother gone wrong, and didn't leave till my tongue and my eyes were gone. I was some twenty years old when I'd returned and now, a decade later, my body bitter with what it'd seen, was only just at the beginning of what would eventually become a catastrophe. I had returned because to have stayed away would've offended that part goes tick in the wee hours of the morning, the bit that calls each of us from out our beds and follows us like a wriggling perforation in the sky throughout the day.

Then I got a phone call from a gruff voice promising great bounty from the combined effort of he and I. *All you got to do is get the stuff bound and on the shelves of a few choice vendors*, he'd said. He would do the rest. This happening to come just when the political pamphleteering racket had become more of a burden than a boon, I didn't hesitate to respond. He explained that we'd never have to meet. I could simply give his check to the courier on the first of each month, from whom I was also to receive the new material, at that time.

Usually it happened exactly as he had explained, the pictures arriving in an unmarked manila envelope, each month brought down by someone different. And although I came to expect those visits from some aspiring thug, fingering his collar when he threw the package on my desk, then holding out his hand to receive the payoff, if (as it sometimes was) one of the girls brought them down, I could be sure to spend a haunted evening at the bar, musing on what needs be done to save another starling from the fire, but always forgot come morning

and returned to my menial tasks.

At least once I got lost in the eyes of a blonde with her hair mussed. She was standing with her back rigid, but her head was nuzzling her shoulder. She was turning to go (having thrown it in front of me and forgotten her check) when I asked her. *You like it*, I said. She threw back her hair and I caught sight of her face straight-on for the first time. It was familiar, but the stitches on the cheek were new. She was silent and still, ready to run, but for the moment I had her attention. I cleared my throat. *Your check*, I said and held it up. She reached over, snatched it from out my hand and turned to go. *You just from The House on the Hill*, I said then. *Don't even know your own name*. She may even have been smiling when she reached for the door, her eyes turned in my direction and damp before she'd slipped past.

They were all the same. But sometimes when I was glancing over the spreads sometimes their eyes looked back and their mouths opened there as well, the thin lines of a pink mouth quivering slightly from out its glossy casing. This is how it started. They were calling me back from the open window where I could smell the growth in wafts of rhododendron and carbon monoxide. Periodic droplets were dampening the windowledge and my feet were up. It was one of those nights. She'd been gone for a good hour by this point and I still hadn't slit the seal on her delivery.

I wasn't cut out for this kind of work. But the money was good so I kept doing it. I tore the top off the envelope and slid its contents out in a pile onto my desktop. Among the usual 8 1/2 X 12 glossies was a cassette tape. I picked it up, flipped it over, opened the case up to feel around inside. It was an unmarked cassette and nothing more.

I listened to it for a good hour. What was being relayed were instructions. Somehow it'd gotten placed in the wrong packet. I was convinced of that I would later tell Ash. Mostly it was just a series of numbers, but every once in a while words like 'diamorphine', 'psilocyn' and 'tetrodotoxin' slipped out, and then there was the P.O. Box number I wrote down after I'd listened for a second time. That voice was familiar, may even have been the same as the one who first contacted me about the lay-out and distribution arrangement I had going with The House on the Hill, but the words were wrong, like they'd been stated at gunpoint.

I shut it off, slipped the tape in my pocket, and turned back to the pretty pictures strewn across my desktop. But when I looked into that swath of photographs pouting back at me, each wearing the same nose and lips and hair, but each distinct, I rubbed my lips in contemplation, then dialed a friend in accounts payable at Barclay's, the company that now handled postal services for our commonwealth. The P.O. Box I was looking for could be found at their downtown branch.

I stopped by for a visit later that evening, pried open the specified compartment with an accompanying cough and sideways glance at the still sleeping

security guard. I pulled out a sheaf of papers with information concerning Sheffield's excess expenditures, then retired to the bar to think this one through, finally arriving home some time round midnight to state matter of fact that now we got something on the old man let's see how he likes being suddenly shut down himself. It was then you threw me out, stating matter of fact that you would not be involved in any two-bit power plays at the expense of our child's safety over and over again. My shoulders were tense and my own eyes hard, looking you over one last time before I departed because I am a man who was born and then was not, and, on the night in question, was damp and shivering when a cadillac pulled to the side of the road and The Pig got out.

Our friend The Pig always looks as if he's been stuffed into his suits, walking with a slight waddle, his eyes squeezed wide open from the physical exertion brought on whenever he rises from bed to scramble into the other room where he will proceed to pummel any man, beast, or object that comes between himself and his first sudden swig. He was currently swaying with his fist clenched when he climbed from the driver's side and ambled toward me. His brow was pink in a broad splotch. *She finally did it*, he said, with a glance at my single suitcase.

It was too late for this conversation.

Her name is Ashley, and she'd been passing in and out of rooms I inhabit for some years now, beginning that first night I returned home. I found myself walking then, dazed and inconsolable, past barbed wire lots with a divine stain shadowing my vision. She was standing at a bus stop when I first met her and under a streetlamp. She's a small woman with a quivering lip who quickly became the one who hung around with me and mine, because we all bought her drinks is what I used to say with a chuckle when I thought she was out of earshot, but this version of events came under question when I made a mistake after one party in particular, and she gave birth to it. Our baby girl was only several months old by this point, and I was unfit for fatherhood.

Best thing ever happened to you, he said, then coughed into his hand and turned back to the car. *You got to be a man about it*, he shouted back at me. I slammed the door behind me as I slid into my seat, suitcase on lap. He started the motor, pulled out, and took a left. He was going to Candyland as always.

You're lucky. You see your kid on her birthday. Kiss her on the forehead. Then what? You're a free man. Before I could respond he was shouting at the car in front of us. He swerved into a spot.

Telly was already there, sitting by the door with his wandering eyes keeping tabs on every entrance and departure. The guy's got a single gimp leg, and a skull-white part to his thickly greased black hair. Me and The Pig each took a seat. *Jackson. You must remember our friend the taxidermist I am most certainly sure.* The Pig said it with a noticeable grin.

Me, Telly, and The Pig all three'd grown up together, before I disappeared that is at the ripe age of fourteen, off to a farm upstate where I remained restless until my return. In those years of my absence Telly made the simple slip from pickpocket to blackmail to taxidermist, the last being acquired when a charge of his could bear the brunt of covert taxation no longer. It's a small shop up on Lex and 54th with all the same pieces in the window: an owl, a fox, a chipmunk, a menagerie of songbirds and a variety of pelts, each with a designating sign and each on its own wooden stand, collecting dust, and fading with the felt stapled to the display window's base. Originally, this acquisition of his was only a pawn shop for information on underworld activity, every unclaimed piece of evidence somehow ending up in a boar's head, or the sawdust innards of an owl, but eventually he found a second use for that shop, transforming it into a speakeasy of some renown he maintained from behind the beaded curtains that had formerly led to an overample workshop, ushering each customer in with a nod, the shotgun nestled under the counter always ready for retrieval. He was there much of the time, on hand to cope with the occasional shouting match, although usually his customers were the same pockmarked punks formerly worked the streets for him back when all his suits were pressed and that heavy oak cane with ivory inlaid handle was always at the ready, these punks deserters from any number of the gangs we have so little interaction with on a daily basis. (Even though they might be just a few blocks away from a usual haunt, my only connection to this fount of disposable flesh being Dempsey, a gambler from the north side welcome in any borough of the city for the rolls he always carries on his person.) The only two gangs I've ever had any truck with are The Squids and Broadway's Bums, the kids who compose the latter distrustful of my presence but Broadway herself alright – a woman red in the face and bloated, her stained fingers constantly fingering the blade she is always clutching in the manner of a talisman – and my relations with the former gone sour some years ago when a raid on a nondescript warehouse in their part of town led to bad blood on both sides.

Telly would divide his time evenly between the back room and the front counter of his establishment, downing a glass here and there, only to return to that dusty facade out front to watch the street and wait, slipping out periodically to meet up with political figures who consider him the most knowledgeable man when it comes to opinion on the streets and intrigue in gangland, the projects around which he focuses his remaining time being throwing together make-shift galleries down by the wharf and the periodicals we put out conjointly. You see, me being thoughtful enough to look him up when I first returned, and he being the first to suggest that the two of us go into the business of literature, remembering as he did my ability to throw two words together, is how I became the editor for a political pamphlet goes by the name of *People's Power*.

The Pig looked from me to Telly. *Whiskey, anyone?*

After The Pig's departure, I rolled my neck, was about to give Telly what he's got coming when he cut me off to continue because he got plenty more on his mind, his words coming out slick and polished, but running in circles round whatever it was nagging at his forebrain, something about his reserves of patience and my incessant impatience and how if I'd only listen to him for the time it takes a bud to blossom, then maybe I'd give him the credit he deserves. *Alright. Fine. Just tell me what in the hell we're talking about here and maybe then,* I said. The Pig slid in beside me with a thimbleful of rye in each hand.

With a brief glance in his direction Telly continued. *Remember that article Gallagher Thomson wrote few months back? Of course I did. It was brilliant. Let's just say it wasn't received all that well by Mr. Sheffield and his people.* Telly calmly splayed his fingers before him, examining the manicured nails before continuing with his little one man show. *You been shut down, remember? Unless you're willing to print a formal apology and cease all contact with the author in question.* I downed the whiskey and leaned back, cracked my knuckles and eyed him. This I could do. He did something could be misconstrued as a smile, finished off his own shot, then checked the entrance once again just to confirm it was as empty as it'd been a moment ago. *You planning on laying out those materials sent down by The House on the Hill any time soon or're you saving them for your personal collection,* Telly said when his glance returned to my direction. The Pig grunted and adjusted his girth, then fingered his now empty glass.

But let's go back in time for just a moment. All the way back to when I didn't expect anything spectacular like lights to go off, but did think it'd be more than just confetti filling the sidestreets. I got pangs at the office then and ate poorly.

We had just released our first periodical, stacks of pamphlets wrapped in twine filling in the empty spaces of my office. It was a flimsy little number, but we were all ecstatic to have graduated from mimeograph machine to offset printer. I was drinking champagne on my unfurled bed and clinking glasses with The Taxidermist who, after a winking grin in your direction, turned to the others and announced that everyone was invited back to his suburban home for coffee, cakes, and other refreshments. As usual I was inarticulate with sleep deprivation.

The Pig still hadn't shown up, so I ushered everyone out of my office with my hands shoved in my pockets, then sat down on my bed and pulled out my recently purchased pistol (the one I was always to carry under a double-breasted jacket) and looked it over in silence, before laying it in my lap and exhaling loudly, picking up my almost empty glass and downing it in a single swish. I tossed the glass across the room, listening to the tinkling aftermath of its impact and licking my lips. I stood up with the weapon in hand again (a Glock 9 mm) and walked to the window. The jalopy (that would become a permanent landmark of that street) was down there even then. I heard the door.

You goddamned moronic asshole. Congratulations, The Pig said. I turned, still holding the gun, although now it happened to be pointing in his direction. He looked at it, then took to cleaning his teeth while I returned my piece to its holster.

We made our way down the worn marble steps to his cadillac idling by my front door, every inch covered in dents and flecking from rust. The Pig straightened his suit coat before starting the motor, and we pulled out, making a wide arc in the street to turn towards a freeway covered in weeds now but still navigable if you keep the speedometer below sixty. As his car sputtered up the on ramp, The Pig held out his hand and said, *Give me that gun*, his each breath coming out his nostrils in a torrential burst. I handed it over, and he pointed it straight up and shouted that he was so happy right now he could shoot his own fucking arm he said. Car hit a pothole and he shot a hole in his roof, then tossed the gun onto the dash in disgust.

By the time we got there, bouncing over the cracked asphalt road, a periodic curse come bubbling out of The Pig our only conversation, pulling up to Telly's white-shingled two-story with manicured lawn and bodies strewn about and sometimes in pairs, our friend The Pig was ready for blood, irritated that someone somewhere way back when had convinced him to come out to this decaying extension of our metropolis, soon to be amputated by the strongarm of justice. He slammed his car door behind him, but not before grabbing the gun from off the dash. *These fuckers're about to find out what playtime really means*, he said.

The long front porch was cluttered with loose suits blowing in the slight summer breeze and filled out with musculature. One held another by the wrist and a deal was made involving one of those unoccupied bedrooms. We slipped past and to a room filled with melody, glee, and a heavy dosage of gin. You were already there and you were dancing. You called out to the whole room that we should get up on something and let it all hang out with a slur, but we weren't about to let our buckles loose not just yet. We were by the doorway and we were watching for the cops (who'd issued a curfew just days before), and I was thinking of going back in to spend the remainder of my night on a rancid couch, when The Pig shot up Telly's transistor radio and conversation turned to screaming. You were smiling at me through a sea of running heads. The house cleared pretty quick after that, and we spent the rest of the evening on his lawn watching the trees grow restless.

You of course were and are Ashley. The one I will always remember as the little woman who touched me. At first I was just as ready to slit your throat as to look at you, Ash. But you kept finding your way into my arms and on a night filled with panting, with you clinging to my abdomen and quivering, something changed. That was several years gone now, but it stays with me the way scents do, popping suddenly to the surface when I accidentally stumble upon a piece of

cloth for example reminds me of a dress you once wore, or something like that. But for long periods it is gone, completely concealed behind a curtain of rage.

There is not much left for me to say to you, Ashley. You know what's coming well as I, but you don't know me, only the man you thought I could be. And in this you were wrong. You were wrong to ask anything more of a one whose sole purpose from infant on was to bludgeon and regret.

But at that particular moment I was at Candyland I was waiting and I was ready, perhaps asking a question or cringing with the populace at the direction Mr. Sheffield and his toadies were taking The Atlantic Bloc. I was chain-smoking and couldn't stop my hands from shaking, smoking fingers and teeth stained, looking from The Pig smacking his lips, hat back on his broad forehead, to Telly's darting eyes.

Candyland was a long hall of a place, below street level, a thirty foot mahogany bar filling a third of the place, the area marked off for fights just beyond, and in the rear elevated seating for those who wanted to see the fights but without any splattering of blood upon their freshly pressed clothes, a wood stove in one corner of the raised area. It had a cement floor and the waitstaff still wore tuxedos because the college was right next door. All the walls were adorned in framed photographs of politicians now dead and newspaper clippings concerning major events of the last quarter century, the glass behind which these historical artifacts were housed covered in grease. The jukebox was towards the rear as well, full of names like Rosemary Clooney and Lee Hazelwood. It was a quiet place when free of fights and welcoming in its way, with little men on every stairwell (the stairs wound backwards, both up and down, out of three of its four corners) and raspy-throated children in the rafters, making jokes and smoking cigarillos, their tank tops stained dark in spots. Everyone came for the prizefighting, until a nose broke open or someone picked up a chair. Invariably it ended with me disheveled, tieless and my hair sticking out. The Pig had taken to cracking his knuckles, waiting for the fights to begin with a backward glance, and Telly was brooding, massaging his chin and keeping watch over the table and his empty glass.

It was at least once a week that we all found ourselves in this basement apartment near the five and dime near the church, sitting for hours and watching from the bar or one of the little tables against a wall as the place filled up with bobbling couples and gruff overwieldy men. *You want my opinion*, The Pig's saying when he turned back. Telly rubbed his face and I was still. *The morons they got tonight too scared for fighting. I saw the line-up. Guy looks like he could use a little in the way of nourishment*. I said something along the lines of anger. Telly would have to be leaving in just a moment to check in on his own concerns uptown. *That place's all full up with runaways. I hate to go up there*, The Pig said then.

I'd rather you didn't. I'm nursing a certain type of clientele, Telly said.
Yeah. Snivelling brats and undercover cops.

I took this as my cue. *Either of you heard from Dick Caraway recently,* I said. Sudden silence. The Pig broke it. *Steer clear of him,* he said.

To which I merely leaned back and contemplated the inside of my eyelids, and the face of a one I once took to be my benefactor, just an older version of myself at the time, a quivering lump of flesh in the form of a boy, keeping watch while the rest of us ransacked some apartment whose occupants had gone out for the evening. After my father died Caraway'd taken care of me in a way older brother Jamison never would, taken care of me in a world Jamison would never enter.

Because Dick Caraway [a.k.a. Canary] had been one of ours as well, until he grew up to become a cravat-wearing crooner, a tall quiet man who would periodically rat on his close associates to tougher hoods who kept him comfortable, got him a nice government job when his melodies went out of fashion, now married with children off in the burbs somewhere, not too far from Telly actually. There were those said the guy'd gone soft, but even with his sensuous silk wardrobe and delicate touch I found it difficult to believe. If anything I'd have said the opposite was true. Back when we were all sneaking through windows to swipe appliances he was already in close with a tough went by the name of Corothers (who had the entire town under his implacable stare back then) and his crew of geeks. Canary has always been at the elbow of some hefty mess of a crimeboss, perhaps playing himself as small fry, but it was just a part he played after all.

He would never have come down to Candyland for example, even though it was in Candyland that he got his start, as the opening act for the blood and guts routine. The places he went now were the kind wiped down to a gleaming finish with every man who passed through the curtained entrance glistening with hair grease, and every woman done up in pearls. But Candyland had something those places couldn't touch. Candyland was more than just some mottled chrome escape that's fresh this week.

It's where the three of us could take shots at each other's swinging macelike pride while reclining in cracked vinyl booths with our teeth set and eyes level, spittle staining our words. There were no spotlights roaming the crowd, but that's just fine by me. We had plenty to concern ourselves with as it was, without the burden of fashion causing us to nibble at our fingernails. Instead perhaps I'd be sitting up with my eyes always watching for something, for greens and greys, for the ground to collapse in upon itself for example, or for an end to the temporary peace our graft had bought us. But with liquor rolling freely from hand to mouth, we talked mostly of what was, and what would come again.

Before had been a time of pearly aspirations, when shock'd become a forgotten imitation of its former illuminating self. We were sprayed clean and our

unstable stability was held dear as an element of eternity. When all of this was uncovered as the sham it'd always been, windows shattered in a popping line, the glass blowing outward, a line of cars going up alongside in their parked positions, and screeching wheels when traffic'd stopped with a skid and two passenger sides touching. It was then that the now began. After the innocence of the road had been run dry, and my hands had taken to shaking mornings, and my mouth was made of cotton.

It is what I woke to that first morning, running to my window with my palm resting gently on my holster, a moaning mother holding her child's head in the mop of her hands on the street down below, and men walking with the purpose that designated their right to rule these streets. I spent the following days prowling round with my pistol out, lurking in the doorways of abandoned government buildings filling with needles and emptying of the papers used as starters to the flame, and everywhere the hush of suspicion. Slowly a new rhythm took hold, one in which we took on the appearance of order, while simultaneously fighting in the streets for a loose bit of bread or a stash of canned goods. The city was partitioned then, between a few teetering groups with access to munitions and over it all was the omnipresent picture of Colby Sheffield advising the population to return to their homes and await the eventual return of an order everyone recalled with furtive statements by the radio, before turning to the window with a cough.

Recollections always rested eventually, however, on that single moment when the population of our republic realized of a sudden what had been taken from it, that being when the fires began and with them a sea of eyes straining towards the capitol, fists raised not in unison but in blind flails, each claiming as his own the ground on which he stood before being knocked to the side by another prescient blow. It took an economic ruin halting our government at every tier of its operation to bring us out screaming from our hovels. It was then we completed the process of eating ourselves out from within.

For we aren't just about to fall, we've already fallen, and when it comes to stopping there's nowhere in sight. It is an empty notion we have left alone for tomorrow. It is time. And it is screaming.

And Then God Created Heaven and Earth

1. Categories

1.0.0 Does the ground consist of spires?

What is and what is not within the world that you are planning to create? Does the ground consist of spires that reach to the tips of the atmosphere, or is the entire orb made up of a teeming mass of encephalocapsules? (Brain capsules.) All of this begins with categorization. Create a series of types, beginning with animate and inanimate matter, or god and mortal, or up and down, and from these preliminary dichotomies you can create the great font of being, the million hordes and so forth.

1.0.1 The single question of purpose

Of course, I should comment that categorization, though essential to the creation of the various things that populate your event horizon, is anathema to the place from which all of this springs. Behind all the categories is the single question of purpose, or if not purpose then simply that which is not. To win The God Game is to lose (I cannot reiterate this enough), because once you have won there is no more game and without a game why bother even writing this book?

1.0.2 Essential to creation and the fault of escapism

But categories are essential to creation. Although it is possible to attempt to create a world without any distinctions whatsoever, this would more than likely be a very short game, and therefore considered largely unsuccessful, but perfect for those who relish these sorts of failed experiments. (Though, in all honesty, all who play The God Game must learn to relish failure.) On the other hand, any God Gaming Enthusiast who focuses exclusively on categorization without looking also towards the that-which-is-not would to my mind be suffering from the simple fault of escapism, creating a husk with no meat, names without substance. Only when we begin to think of the interaction between objects and species do we begin to see The God Game revel in its glory, and it is within this interaction that both questions of purpose and mystery surface. A God Game without interaction is a static world, one waiting to develop, but always frozen in expectancy. This also is no good.

1.0.3 Introduction to levels while brainstorming concerning categories

Categorization has a variety of levels. For example, I can speak of different types of matter, or I can speak of different attributes any given species might have. I can speak of the different levels of reality, or I can speak of interactions within a specific tier. I start with basic principles, such as that there is no such thing as inanimate matter, then ask the question that then if my world has rocks, what is a rock, and how does it move? This is how we begin to brainstorm concerning categories.

1.0.4 Elasticity and species creation as example

Elasticity is an attribute I have been thinking about quite a bit recently. It can be applied to all matter in our world, and if we were to take a God Gamer and ask him or her to create a world that existed on one square inch of skin, this person could do wonders with elasticity, as microscopic organisms seem to excel in this department. (I am thinking primarily of amoebas now.) Humans and mammals, however, are fairly low in elasticity, when we think in terms of musculature and skeletal framework. Trees even more so.²

² See next page.

1.0.4.1 Example of telepathic moss and demons

Then again, if we consider exploring the categorization of various tiers of reality we can concoct a one world filled with demons that coexist completely unnoticed by the highly intelligent moss exist in another world, for example. The moss, let us say communicates entirely through telepathy, while the demons perhaps live in villages constructed on the interconnected fibers of the moss-thoughts without ever being aware that this is the stuff of which their realm consists. These dimensional dependancies can consume hours of an afternoon. What sort of food product would grow on moss-thoughts? When demons die, do they evaporate? And if so, might the moisture their bodies create settle as dew in the other dimension, or is any interaction between two dimensions an impossibility by the creator's definition of what a dimension is, et cetera? You can see how involved this can become.

2. Discerning levels

2.0.0 Official introduction to levels

As with everything that has to do with The God Game, there are a variety of levels when examining a thing, the macroscopic and microscopic being the most obvious. We have already gone into some detail concerning these different layers to be considered when first laying out the map by which your world will be developed, but to hazard redundancy, I would like to first acknowledge that as to variety there are an infinite number of possible level-types. That having been said, I usually begin with a three-tiered system, these three tiers being broken into the physical, emotional, and transcendental.

² I would like to make a brief comment concerning elasticity and attributes in general. Every attribute is applicable to different types in its fashion. A person is elastic in ways that amoebas are not (for example, dare I say, conceptually, i.e. manipulation of tools), and likewise with trees. (Think of redwoods and the manner in which their root systems interlace such that it is impossible to discern where one redwood ends and another begins, i.e. elastic sense of selfhood in a different though not unrelated – the one (trees) is intra-species specific while the other is not – manner as the human elastic sense mentioned before.) It is precisely this how-you-define-elasticity which opens a whole other very key problem, the problem of rigid or open-ended definitions. To say that all things are elastic depending upon circumstance and definition of the ability, is to make the attribute null and void, but also to be describing phenomena in a more accurate (albeit relativistic) fashion. This will be explored in a later chapter when we talk about the field versus the rule.