Headrest (An excerpt)

By: Josh Bisig

Still hoping to get back to civilization someday forever making adjustments Kenneth's memories were emissaries. There were no brigands in the forest, that was good, so relieving. Must he take some of these superstitions seriously? He often reviled himself in his sleep, reticent on the hard terrain, something he didn't know about himself. The ants—he could crush those with a finger, yes, those were simple enough—but these superstitions. How to grant them a proper status among reality. One they could deserve. Well, the ants, they are social at least, very social, but can they decide to crush another, can they mentally heal themselves with a self-ful agency? All of them carpentering, with endless appetites, trampling over their diminutive mounts, coming up one hole only to go down another, tied to the Fat Whore with things dangled in front her all day; would it happen that one of them might surface and stand on that diminutive mount and proclaim a stark status—No. They're all already equal. Lose. Yet they know not they lose. How ironic. They live in iron. They certainly cannot blush in ecstasy at the thought of another.

He placed a hand consciously on his knee in an effort to get up. Realizing it more effective on the ground, he placed it there instead, got up nicely. He stood, at first before actually standing. Superstanding. Bid adieu to superstition since there is the sun. Now there is something to stand on. Hardlight. She wards all with light, and his stance in front like a true-blue fella.

He hankered for a succulent breakfast, but naught. Hunger herself is an expert dominatrix. A seminal appetite of professionalism among the unwary select—humans. We don't forget names, though, except maybe those watery uncles of our past. Our aunties with the crewel yarn who taught him to sew.

—Fine day, he answered cutely, followed starkly by the cruelest yawn. And all the sun out here turned him into quite the tawny recluse.

He walked the right direction, between two minor mirrored mountains, or some high living hills to the hilt of this forested highway. The more he trekked forward, the more he just looked at his swaying hands.

Upon the crimson quarry where chirped-up birds splayed music through the valleys, a merciless ornithological cronyism, he nonetheless checked his squirmy bearings to conquer. Find the tiger, find the wolf: his purpose for being here. In his pocket some American coins with profiled faces, they're cronies too. Consolidated coin cronies, made one out of many. Nickels, quarters, and dimes—the triad. No one gives a shit about pennies. His hair was growing long—wished he had a mirror. The curses and cures of his endurance were all part of the resplendent clangor of birds and beasts. His queries and their queries. Now where was that watch he got from the bore-brain huckster and the keen men in the throb of Hobart? Ah there in his hand.

A lower hunger throb he blamed on jeering villains. Those little devils scavenged his rucksack to hell last night. Ah hell the feral felons. They went from beggars to baggers overnight. Maybe next from fun to funeral.

He drank some water. Calmed down. The bugs ceased buzzing acquiescently.

Siftingly, the erosion of his whims withheld him, his harmonic ideals fled decently from his weaving glowy wake as if his sleeping sack, fluffed and downy, were torn and left to the haggarding wind to scoop every ethereal feather, wafting them haphazardly into unknown crevasses and cracks the world over, lain and strewn and fused with dirt, or blown high through the weathered bends of mountain vents, or horrendously vaporized by some tiny pelting bolt shot from Sunday storms. But all those soulthuds and blunders were his. Undressing the highreaching

mountain in the distance, far after the splayed valleys he crooked now, he felt that he had already climbed the mountain to its peak, gone back down, and circumnavigated it. His conclusion was that it was a mountain—maroon and snowcapped. If he were compelled to traverse and scale every inch of its surface area, he assumed that, although he may scrutinize more specifically the mountain itself, the fact that it was a mountain would not change. He was aware that, were he to scale it, the mountain may reveal itself to be hollow, supported by some magic gossamer casts and pillars, but he maintained that he would rather remain under illusion than learn such a sordid truth.

He wore a reduced grin which lingered like signal smoke, and through it quaffed warm water. What had this quack been up to? He coddled the canteen in his hands. That ranting mongrel promising Kenneth copious wealth in modern currency, goring him with prestige, exhorting him to wander like a rangy aboriginal through the Tasmanian wilderness and endure her fickle weather—fashioning one day for snow, the next for rain, and the next for a wayward heat. This was involuntary to him. To what extent could he have refused the offer, he asked himself. He needed it because he fled from an involuntary conscription and its country. But to what extent could he have not fled, he interrogated himself. He could have not fled, but could have instead refused and would have been imprisoned; or he could have not fled and reluctantly abided the mandatory appeal—his individuality bound by the political afflictions of civil blasphemy. No, as an individual, this must have been the only thing he could have done—refuse by fleeing that is—with his rebellious heart on his treasonous sleeve. Mud in his eye, mud in his heart, mud in the fire.

He must be like a room for some heroic human herd, furnished with wood of a hopeful finish, heated by furnace fire, burning lingering regrets and sundered hope, jiggled and upheaved on a chique collared, greenbearded, billiard felt table. Make way for the clear air, he thought, bring him the tigerstriped cash.

The tree round the trail began to form a sylvan nave. This place of myth and mystery looked like anywhere and nowhere: Anywhere he just was; nowhere he had been. Out here with the animals and elms was utter anonymity. He felt, out here with the animals and elms, utterly anonymous. He was certain he didn't know where he was or how to escape the forest, or whether there was any chance in finding the wolf, but he was also aware of a glorified sense that he was not lost, of familiarity. He was not lost and therefore could not be found, but he was ignorant of his location in relation to any other location. The pastoral locale was the breadth of his proximal existence. Not until darkness mauled over the surroundings at night would he be lost in the cool dormitory of the woods, when so many things come alive yet everything that is normal is dormant as greeting death. The house is a shelter from the terrors of the outside world, but he felt that this wilderness now must be a shelter from the tragedies and woes of home. A shelter from shouting. A haven from harassment. Here the dangers seem warranted. There is merit in caution here. It is perfect. What compels us to stay. Anywhere. He was unsure, and losing faith in the existence of the Tassie wolf.

I'm just going to say it. I ha
Relating hammers and wol
But then I got into a car acc
And the aroma of blood pr
Kind of like pickle juice spi
Then a smart-alec poem ab
discharging her coke onto
didn't seem too screwy any
Creepy poems are good po
If they're disturbing and da
But I thought of the colors
And those seem really lit u
Kind of like my aunt. She w
The night her blood peppe
Nightmare on Elm Street g
Her sister gave me her puri
I don't think I'm the one th
But our accidents trample
And I feel like I'm back at
Kind of like that song...the