

Jonathan Sova - Creative Writing Sample

Leo Kelroy fingered the spot in his mouth where his tongue used to be. The darkness had taken everything from him. His sense of time was the first thing to go, as the sun never penetrated the walls. Oh, how he'd prayed for just a glimmer of light. Perhaps he should've asked for forgiveness first.

They kept him drugged in the beginning and he fought to retain the knowledge that took his freedom. It was a new science. No, the only science. A language - if such a designation could be used - that reconciled physics with metaphysics and purely expressed the *forms* of things, as they eternally exist beyond our plane. It was Theirs, and that was why he had to be punished.

He'd managed to hold onto bits and pieces of it, enough to attempt escape once in a different prison. He only intended to remove his cell door but he'd made a mistake somewhere and all seven stories of the miserable chateau simply vanished. Guards and inmates above the third floor fell to their deaths.

They moved him to a new facility after the mess was cleaned up and took his tongue to prevent further incidents. Here, there was only darkness. His mind no longer bothered to cast the phantasms that used to keep him company. It was never hot or cold, and the air, thick with sweat and diarrhea and rust was silent as a grave in winter - until recently. It'd carried something curious to his ears, the first sound from the outside in memory: screams. A little muffled, but he'd been certain they were screams.

The guards stopped coming after that. He would've starved by now if a rat hadn't wandered in a couple days ago, which he made sure to tenderize first because his motor skills had suffered with the loss of his tongue. The tail was still hard to get down. The thought sometimes occurred to him that, perhaps, he had already succumbed to hunger and keeping him here weak and alone was Orrin's method of vengeance. The gods had answered lesser blasphemies with harsher punishments in legend. Such a notion was too much to bear for a mind so far gone.

"Errrreekkh.... pehh! Hhee me!" he cried.

Lilith, please. Hear me.

And she did hear him. The door to his cell flew open and Lilith brought with her not just a glimmer of light but the radiant sun. He lacked the strength to crawl to a corner so he cowered lower, prostrate on the floor out of respect for the goddess and her host that filed in.

“Dim the lantern. You’re blinding him,” a man’s voice called. “Leo, you can look up.”

Two strong arms pulled him up. His eyes adjusted painfully and the face before him came into focus as a sharp looking man in his 30’s, close to himself in age.

“It’s me.”

Leo continued to examine the face. There was something familiar about the oiled goatee and the calculating hazel eyes; the realization knocked the breath out of him.

“It’s Jarrett. I need you to do something extraordinary.”