

PLAGUE CITY

Border

You bring as much as you can carry on your person. Oceans of emptiness over your sleeves. Slather your mouth with jovial pleas. Complaints hallucinogen windows cathedrals. No border patrolmen escort you. Tollbooth rhythm of rusted gunfire. Thin blood mists dry on murk interior. Graffiti, rubble, and rot have taken it. Only during brief splurge spring does it bloom miraculous ardor sluggish birth. Muddles of congestive species layered within. Slur sickness bright moist struggle, quarantines, tropics. Each raw flesh jewel. Violence mystical, ancient. Deep gnotics flush under your eyes. Every station on route an upheaval. When did revolt infect this zone? Which zone? Yours, another's, one within yours? Which factions reigned a year, six months, a week ago? Rapid transit past evaporates high noon drought. Exhaust rises deep desert mirage. Turn your head wind carrying dead leaves odor decay. You can't remember how or why you arrived. You are as you appear in dreams. Light process as you pass traitor borders. What do you carry? Consider weight, how much you could hide on your person. What flesh offers as connive and subterfuge. What are your deceits? Virtue interchanges as vice on a moral submarket. You're prepared with tender, switchblades, Swiss army knives, swindle, art, stratagem. Luxur underfurs curl under flesh, pocketsfull neurotoxins pure sun soak tundras torch napalm. Palatable matter mass, ounce for tender amorous ounce. What could be confiscated? Taken by self-appointed authorities and thieves. Which authorities are not self-appointed or thieves? Uniforms of genetic experience brilliant day-Glo standards. Maps score through your eyes, ingrown instincts of direction. Fingertips, follicles, tip of the tongue, gouge of the throat. Imagine these as separate entities, palavers, light fingered pickpockets, televisions housed in the plexus. 3D waves of hypnocolor flutter through tree rickety four hour bus ride at dawn. Smudged warmth traveling companions unwashed breath cigarettes hash blood piss. You look out windows of your eyes at seven cities. You're citizen to all. No part of you not a skilled scavenger, a trader, a

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merchant, a traitor. What do you hold? What do you offer? Snide
perversity of directions. Winks nods gestures drowned narcotic haze.
Hands reach pockets finger thigh contents sweating entity.
Flickercards appear graphic overlay. City beamed graphic transmission
gravity bust silver through cortex. It bursts into low card deal from
the bottom stutter gutterpunch. Passports bullets hash pipes stained
bills anted. A map of the fallout city. You wake on the side of the
road under the yawn of night. Roads littered with fabric of disasters.
Bridge curled mathematic helix. Ovens, dishwashers and washing
machines flung out firecrackers hailstorms neurotic weather.
Overturned touring cars torched petrol gasoline skeletal groans boiled
down overcooked corpses. Wrung ruined landscape. Earth itself gone off
on misery benders. You stumble past carcasses of chilly tenement
roominghouses, larval swimming pools. Mutant lily pads struggle to
surface. Bombed walls open static skies. In sleepwalk, evening
streetlamps birth stuttering neon. Streets emerge. Flesh thinks. Cool
shadow falls over your shoulders at mouths of alleys. Warble records
molten windows. Radios buzz from every corner. Doors opens telegrams
arrive. Figures appear at stairwells with burnt curtains. Mesh of
phone taps jerry-rigged phone lines vibrate radioactive evening.
Canals downriver thick enough to walk across. Sewage bubbles between
crippled sidewalks dries to a solid pulp. Stop at a hotel left propped
open lights flicker spastic. Pass shadows watching you. Approach the
desk, papers in hand. Ring the bell. Welcome to Plague City. Please
enjoy your stay.

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You and He Who Is

Ask him, who is you, was it the bodybuilder magazine he found on this basement floor? He and you alone. Tools, rank heady motor oil, antifreeze, round up, bug spray. Each object shadow chemical spirit. Low slur fear oozes step anxious step. Your house full hustle bloom summer afternoon clothed heady reek stepfather's booze, cigarettes smoke hot black bottle flies . Baseball game turned high. The world tilts. You call it a bodybuilder's magazine. You didn't know what it's called. You'd been dragged here by collar, hair, ears your brother or brothers' friends. You can't remember their games. Where this habit began. You for him. Him in your place. Under summer muscles spawned growth spurt musk. Trace ragged strength patterns on roof your pleading hungry for everything tensile veins your appetite. And there it is, waiting, bait. You who is he turned in dark, searching rippleless shadows for twitch, smirk, shiver. Hot needles grow from your neck. Swollen leaves drooping piss yellow across yesterday's report cards, board books, coupons on burn pile. Folded on spine striptease. It's your first time seeing a man. His V torso mountain range rippling abs waxed to smooth hard terrain. Adam's apple, broad stubbled chin. They could be rock formations in another nebula. Flared nostrils, high elegant arching bridge. Camera angled low curve bulging jock strap, erect knot ridge. Stripes on thighs where straps cut tight. Pornographers tie men off give bulges lift. You'd try it yourself. Its fruit ancient harvest: eggs, grapes, frost stiffened peaches, hail, cherry stones, wet, warm. You were nine. Five years would pass before you who is he felt bristling hotwires heady scent on face thighs back legs. His spine trembles need. You didn't know words except playground words. Faggot. You'd heard it at nine. You who is he didn't put that magazines on the burn pile, squeezed it under your mattress. No one saw. Eyes peopling your bedroom did not. He sat on the edge of your bed crying. Fingered pages under your pillow. That's how it began. Hot jissom ocean mind unpopulated. You who is he remembers tides, depthless, hungry, liquid gravity rocking against your thighs. When you come he is a strange orbit swirling down a

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urinal drain spray white galaxy alive shining burst into existence. Floors glittering constellations of Plague City. Oceans possessed before storms. Green dips down low over water. It was not always this. It was not always sticky carpets of cars, cramps, migraines, ulcers, aches, bleeds, bruises, breaks. It was not always pockets sticky lubricant foil wrappers cash phone numbers. My what pretty bones you have. It was not always sweat between thighs worse than piss worse than rope tied around as men jerk off in the corner worse. Once it was this basement, magazine, photograph, burn pile, chemicals, sweat circle left by boys' bare feet, your stepfather's cigarettes and booze, spheres of heat above your hips, something with no name between you and he who is.

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Over the Arc

You can lose every part of yourself, let them take half of you away, all day movie tickets murk blurry blue theatre at the end of the world; you can be swallowed like beauties two toned ambulances crucifi; you can be discarded like syrettes, bottle caps, tinfoil wrappers; you can be tossed like a rubber shooting off in air falling impossible arcs landing miraculously nowhere never hitting smeared floors; you can let yourself be swallowed as constant gravity inside him. You wake in a bare room on smeared mattresses in other skins. The thick shelled adolescence drifted wet hungryfull light limitless dark earth. What it would feel like to work through intestines, squeeze dense contorted solid. You can't imagine further. Sometimes, sweat collecting between your thighs, tender stiffness in deep muscles. It's not hard, rough afterbirth. Imagine yourself giving birth to every gap orifice dilating with sounding pain. Your body buckled, tightened from chest to toes. He said you're pretty when you're scared. Incisors and canines on your skin. I wanna see you jump. To see that hot metal rod slip inside. Imagine it traveling straight flat blunt through narrow. You can't imagine anymore. My, what beautiful bones you have. An hour before, he whipped you with a leather strap buckle side up. Handful of dollar bills oilpaper and tremble left in yours when you wake. Pain flashes behind your eyes, sharpness, texture, color. Sometimes, you wake staring into the soul of your injection site. Imagine you're bottom of a black hole galaxy, expanding to swallow every jagged neon corner; you could gulp tarnished fluorescent reality seas into this monstrous pit. All desires, consumptions, transcendences within you. You saint of plenty. It is all for sale, half price, except this ball of dark pleasure above your hips. Once you walked into one of many over molded headshops guarded by luckless, junk sick, bloated and blind. Days, you find their kin under stacks; you're too young to belong. You found that spry frail manual. Studied light maps feverishly, repeated letters, numbers, motions of breath, how to hold palms parallel to earth. A name of god on your tongue. He told you buy it or get out get that there cigarette outta your mouth boy what you

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think this. At fifteen, your life was a constant electric summer carousel, thin hostel cots warm with sweat, dingy cafeterias with tinny coffee. You dreamt summer boys would last. Your body now a thin winter of scars. That's what brings you here, this market, these hologram theaters. Sometimes, you imagine generations of seed below your feet, bogs, mushroom jungles. Look up; you can see them in black light on the ceiling sacred cave stalagmites, showering powdered snow. Projectors flare, fiery sediment generations, colonies, payloads. It hammers through you double shipments, paydirts, jackpots. You're unzipped by no hands. You never look back or across at faces or hands. He breathes heavier, speed, entropy, satellites, fallout, orbits. Everyone focuses on jobs. Hands could have their own work. You know what old men with toothless gums, slick palmed two bit traveling salesmen, greased hooligans with shaved heads rippling arms torsos tattoos carved muscles cannot. Once you saw a print of Man Ray's minotaur that chest belongs to any every one ball of dark pleasure rises just countdown onscreen begins, as nerves rise through your skin, as hallucination darkness falls. It took you one day to learn hands hold sleek waves rough static. You feel them on your skin instant before contact. You draw breath parallel to earth close your eyes ball of pressure pushes tighter bottom of a supernova at birth, you are not here, inside out, lifted, landing somewhere nothing is for sale and never was.

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Dawn's Early Light

Behind screens, lights grow hungry. Organs flicker color wash dust seas silent as the moon. Violent brilliant blossom of croon. You swallow potent silver decay. Neon neurons glow. You imagine yourself a static garden. Nights shivering jissom and tinsel, sick hipped glitter pageants. Satellites plummet from Hollywoods in orbit. You hot death billboard on the moneymaker block. Avalanche hours as a mattress astronaut. Sometimes imagine last breaths launched into orbit. Black holes rupturing slick ankled photo booths infrared indigo. Lips chapped clean as winter steppes. One night you dropped those hallucination selves into a grate. Inhaled. Cheap chandelier drops sap trickling fallout timber. Once you saw a tree blasted ten yards away. Splinters showered like burning glass. Once a bullet passed under your ear not aimed at you or anyone in marketplace afternoon purest dead boredom at the guard asleep in his blood rust shack he shook awake at one of the many desecrated murals of a revolutiones solider his uniform many revolts ago coils of drunken applause roiled across balconies catcalls shrieks wild you know the word faggot in 20 different languages there was nothing to say duck. Sometimes you imagine yourself saint of unknown virtues. Trunk intact glistening black. For days you thought of a house made of its inside wider than a cabin. Imagined yourself curled in its rotten hollow. Waves of avenging angel. Lurid fungus feeding. You remember a parable about a strawberry. This is not your house. It had no shadow. It covers dreams tundras distant as the moon. Try to find the soundtrack. Roars raps cluster crush laughter. Revolutionas think themselves filmmakers. Red white yellow subtitles pour across your back obscenities in ten languages. Antifreeze air throws your silhouette against this screen. It plunges soft spots in your bones. Imagine that first carjacking. You careened country road red earth flapping high into wind, foot to that baseboard, hit 90 as curve gave out. There. That highway. You never wandered this far. You're nine. Sputtering machine twisting, barreling across barriers. You thought I won't swim up. I'll stay here. Woke on rough tarmac, red and white ambulance sirens. You

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ancient sailing map colored amnesia, lust country, terminal edge.
Endless plunge suicide swoop. Imagine yourself bird spinning down
slamming concrete, feathers blood shit speed upside down. Once you saw
a man sucked through the propeller of a biplane, gristle chunks bone
mist fine shower. This film, sitting on another low wall early spring.
Golden brown hand on yours, thigh across your knees. Delicate sweat
coats hollows in his throat. Your limbs coil with his. You woke alone
on your back acid rain dew pockets picked. You'd learn to snatch
apples eggs soda pop sandwiches. You're not whiplash slash boys across
covered streets. Imagine stones skipping across a dark pond. Death
that last arc which sinks deepest. Inner ripple fading. Your hole
clenches. Absence is the sign of something which should be, shape of
dust where something is dragged violent sudden away. The dirty wet
footprint. Busted exit sign gleams spastic fervor. Knife boy faster
than wind blows. His hand on your belt eager ready cutting close. Open
your mouth against his. Hashish pipe, sugar skull, raw meat, leather.
Your tongue slices sharpened teeth. You taste sticky warmth, a broken
capsule, a prayer, a swallow.