

Stupor by Jed de Sousa

I sit on the teetering edge of a dream realized and the starkness of a life of sameness.

I came to understand this one evening as I drove myself home, enduring the barrage of insults to my senses: Traffic backed up for miles, the insensitivity of my fellow human beings, and the bondage of a life colored pathetically within the lines in shades of grey.

The signal light of the car ahead of me blinked its intention to turn left. Another was going to go to the right. All neatly planned and orchestrated, almost to the point of acting out some bizarre ballet set to computer music; and I found myself transfixed momentarily, neither going right, going straight, or going left. In fact, I froze like a deer in the headlights on the Highway of Life.

Do not characterize this event as me engulfed in some sort of textbook case of a midlife crisis. The only crisis I seem to be suffering from is the crisis of meaninglessness. My hunger will not be satisfied by throwing me a nymphomaniac, a high-priced sports car, a cushy Wall Street job and a house large enough to count my millions. If anything – in that frozen stare of mine on that drive home – my heart screamed out to be removed from complicated lifestyles and from the masses that groveled to attain them.

I placed my foot on the accelerator and honed in on the beacon that came from the direction of my house. I looked into the faces of the people in their cars coming from the opposite direction. I saw nothing. They were expressionless, silent, individual zombies and human shells following the program. Was this the life that we were meant to live? And I found myself mentally vegetating into that same dream state again that told me to ignore it, pay it no attention, and maybe it will all be better tomorrow.

But the fact of the harsh matter was that I had had a “good day.” I did the required number of laps around the Corporate Treadmill,

drank the required amount of caffeine-tinged fluids to charge my power cells, and metted'n'greeted everyone in the same pleasant robotic tones as everyone greeted me. And I knew, when this day was done, I would place another chalkmark on the wall of my earth-bound cell, wait for the warden to come by and say "Well done, Frank!" and sleep... to dream of "horrid" thoughts of freedom.

The next day, engaged in the Dance again, and a little more life would be drained from my veins. Like everyone else, I go "home" at the end of the day, believing that Life IS the act of growing my two-point-five allotted children, kissing my wife mechanically on the face, shuffling mindlessly through the torrent of bodies at the Safeway to get my Soylent Green, and surviving... never to use even one tenth of my brainpower to take myself to other dimensions... or possibilities.

I've never smoked or ingested a drug of any kind in my life. But I could understand why some people do. Occasionally, like myself, going home that black and dismal night, one of us wakes up and senses that something is not quite right about all of this. Inside, my mind screams "I want to wake up! When will I wake up?!" and I hope I listen to it closely the next time I rouse from my stupor.

I know that there is SOMETHING out there that I am supposed to do. THIS certainly is not it! If there IS a God, he did not mean for us to be this way! Not me, not you... ANY of us! I think that I will soon wake up and understand.... Does anybody out there hear me!?