

**the key**

**Hands shaking violently trying to open a locked safe.**

**Voice: I've searched for the location of this box, for what  
seems like a lifetime.**

**I've been collecting potential keys to unlock it even longer.**

**As the key got closer to the lock, I could feel it getting hotter,  
as though it was being called.**

**I put the key in the box and all the lights go off  
The box flies open**

**footsteps running away from the box in every direction.**

**A hand rests on my shoulder,  
Thanking me.**

**What have i unleashed on the world?!?**

**everlasting life  
sentence**

11 years after the end of the world. Those who survived the trials carried a tremendous weight- they had the memories of the death and destruction doled out. They watched “holy justice” come to billions. Some even had to participate. The birth of the New World came with many unexpected growing pains. During the first few months, many felt the burden, the guilt of this newfound perfection and its price, and realized it could be too much to bear.

The wreckage left in the wake of the Great Day, as it had come to be called, began to show signs of the new life that was emerging. Survivors built from the scraps, receiving direction from the stewards of the New World- The High Council. While people were working harder, trying to harvest what they could from what was left, it quickly became evident- more workers were needed, and if the harvest was not to die on the vine so to speak, they would have to be added sooner rather than later.

\*in the beginning 2.0

The High Council, using technology not fully explained, directed the construction of Lab facilities to be built in key areas around the world- Resurrection Center 1191.4 -RC 1191.4, as it came to be called, was the first of these. While the building on the outside was nothing but a hospital that had not been leveled. On the inside, it bustled and hummed with the activity of a high tech city who only had one purpose- refill the earth by bringing back those who had died.

At a cantina table inside the Resurrection Center, lab tech Don Smith is looking over his daily planner while he finishes his morning coffee, when an assistant hands him a manilla folder and a small box of glass slides. "These are your primary assignments for the day, as directed from the high council." the assistant said coldly. Don runs his finger over the slides, creating a pleasant sound that reminded him of the windchimes in his yard in the old world. "a lot of wake up calls today, it seems. I better get to work." Don closes the folder and stands to leave the cantina. He walks down the wide hallway and swipes his key card to enter his work area. Its a large room, with a few metal tables, some computer monitors and a folding chair with a pillow for Don to sit at. On the opposite side of the room a small set of stairs lead to a raised platform with a large cylinder. Don sits on the chair and adjusts the pillow. "I'm going to be the only person in the new system with a bad back." he jokes to himself, as he begins his day's work. He presses a series of buttons on the keyboard and the monitors up, giving life to the cold white tiled room:  
light  
..... ..... ... NWLGT wake up systems....

The monitors flash a few symbols and figures as the machines begin to come online around the lab, and a small port opens. Don places the first of the glass slides on it. An artificial male voice can be heard over the room's speaker system. "CODE RECOGNIZED--GENETIC SEQUENCING COMPLETE-- initiating MEMORIAL TOMB PROGRAMME. REANIMATION PROTOCOL UNDERWAY....."

Don rubs his face, a habit from the old way of things, he doesn't feel tired, as the need for rest, including sleep was one of the first things the High Council went to work on. The survivors were needed to get to work on making things new, five to eight hours of sleep everyday would slow progress down too much. Life everlasting was in view, and it was not for the survivors to slow down the Chariot of the Most High with such trivial needs like rest and sleep. He gets up and enters data into a small keypad on the wall facing the cylinder on the raised platform. The cylinder seals, and begins to fill with a material that looks like dust fills the top half of the cylinder, then begins to fall to the bottom half. Steam begins to fill the inside of the glass, as the silhouette of a man can be seen taking shape. The artificial voice comes back over the room's speakers. "HC Breath of Life issued and successfully completed." The hiss of the hydraulics is almost deafening, as the glass raises slowly, cold steam billowing out down the stairs and balcony as Don looks on. Don stands awestruck and grateful to be a part of such a momentous undertaking, but the chill that always runs up his spine at this moment carries a message of disgust and abhorrence to his brain. He reaches into a small refrigerator and pulls out a bottle of water, as he drinks it he tries to focus more on the cold water in his mouth, as though it was washing the chill away, back to whatever old world portal it traveled through. He knew his work came from the High Council, and their direction was from the Most High. He was still battling imperfection. He knew this, so he would wait patiently for the day where this feeling went away, because it belonged to him. It was his unworthiness of the privilege he had received the gift of bringing people into a new world.

A tall man with dark skin stands where the cylinder and steam once were.

His eyes are blank, as though he hasn't arrived even though his body stands there, as real as anything else in the room. His chest slowly heaves with every breath he takes as Don approaches him. "What's your name?"

Don asks warmly. "M-My name is James. James Albert." says the man, almost as though he's reading a card with a name on it, more than stating his own name. Don smiles, and chuckles "Brother James Albert, welcome to the New System."

"a paradise, the earth will be, with eyes of faith this we can see"

James Albert, born in 1944, sits along the edge of his hospital bed, something he's done many, many times before, but this time, he's doing it with no pain. At the moment, his attention is fixed on his knees, knees that always felt achy and sore, knees that bore hideous scars from the countless surgeries and knee replacements. His knees don't hurt, the scars, erased. He holds a letter in his hand, written to him by the high council. He read it over again:

Dear newly resurrected one,

Welcome to the new system of things. Your resurrection is evidence of our sincere gratitude for your faithful service, as was always promised by us, The Holy Assembly of the Divine Brotherhood. Your life, your vitality has been restored! There is still much work to be done, however, and we need your help in carrying this wondrous load. Before you receive you assignment, please take the small capsule that accompanied this message, and report to the lower level, where your guide and program manager- and myriads of your spiritual brothers and sisters are waiting to meet

you!

Kindest Regards,

The High Council

James eagerly shakes the capsule out of the small plastic bag it was in and swallows it with a handful of water. He washes his hands and walks across the room to dry his hands and looks out of the window for the first time. He can feel the heat of the sun radiating off the window, he can see the growth happening-building going up, roads new and things being restored. In the distance he sees the tattered remains of the old world with people happily working to clean that up as well. "All of it was true, Its all over." he says with a growing smile, a tear falls on his cheek and runs down his chin. He turns to leave the room as he wipes his face, and steps into the hallway.

The area is alive with activity. Newly resurrected ones sit in hospital rooms, like he did. Some sit in large conference rooms, learning more about the world that is so different than the one they came from. Some people are cleaning, some are doing any number of activities required to keep a place of this size and purpose operating at the necessary level. As he makes his way to the lower levels, he begins to hear a sound that is different than all the other stimuli around him, sometimes low, and sometimes shrill, as he follows the sound as it grows louder. He begins counting the room numbers, 603, the sound grows louder, but its not here, 605, louder still, it must be coming from the next room, he can hear it clearer than ever now, this, for lack of a better term, this wailing. He puts his hand on the door to room 607 and prepares to turn the knob when a voice from behind him calls out "James? Brother Albert?" James nervously recoils his hand from the door and turns around, as though he was caught with his hand in the cookie jar. "Yes, I'm James Albert . He extended his hand to introduce himself to the man who called his name. The man gives him a firm handshake and says "So nice to meet you, my name is Mikahl Kenton, the assignment overseer for this region. Welcome back! There's much work to be done, and i want to show you where you'll be wor-"

James interrupts him “yes I’m ready to get started, but I have a son that I would love to see, he and his wife got married just before..uh..it’s been a long time since I saw them, and I’d really like to let him know I’m around. I have their names here-” Mikhal puts his hand on James’ shoulder. “No need brother, I have your son and his wife’s info here, along with their two children.” James is shocked. The news makes him completely forget about what was behind the door in room 607. “I-I’m a -two children?!-I’m a Grandfather??” Mikhal laughs nasally and reassures James “I can arrange time for you all to get together very soon, but I have to get you training for your assignment, and unfortunately we are already behind schedule, and there’s much to be done. We have a long drive ahead.” As they prepare to leave the facility, James notices Don Smith, the lab tech that welcomed him at resurrection and they share a quick wave.

James and Mikhal get into a jeep, with a blue square, the corporate logo of the High Council emblazoned on the side. Mikhal sets the GPS coordinates and the map on the display indicates they will arrive at their destination in three hours and thirty seven minutes. “Long drive.” James says, but the comment falls in silence, as Mikhal seemingly ignores him. The ride continues in awkward silence, as Mikhal says nothing for the entire trip.

James notices how the smooth road creates such an odd juxtaposition with the increasingly grim scenery.

James, slightly confused by the silence on such a long drive, closes his eyes and thinks about seeing his son, daughter in law and their grandkids. “I wonder what they look like, do they look like me, what do they know about me?” He settles in the seat, knowing that with his eyes closed he can’t see what seems so far away from the pleasant, clean, safe Resurrection Center. Out here, he can feel how terrible the end of the old system of things must have been, and it’s almost too much to bear. Mikhal clears his throat, the first sound he’s made since they left. He begins to brief James about where they are going.

“We just discovered this area, the bodies have been removed but not much more.” he says with the all the warmth of a Maine February. “As you can imagine the Great Day saw tremendous loss of life, but the High Council and their holy wisdom had set up an arrangement for us to begin the cleaning process almost immediately after. After we got a head count on where our brothers and sisters were, we received direction on how to make groups designated for bio clean up or RDTDORD, as some of us came to call it.” He finally seems to be warming up to James, as they turn down into a smoldering wreck of a neighborhood. Alan cant resist asking what the ridiculously long acronym stood for, “RDTDORD?” he asks, preferring to look over at Mikhal, as opposed to the worsening conditions around them. Mikhal chuckles through his nose, and a smile creeps across his face. “Rightfully Disposed To Dispose of the Righteously Dispatched.” James is slightly taken aback “ That’s pretty cold, don’t you think? I mean, they were people too.” Mikhal slams on his breaks, bringing the jeep to a screeching halt, causing James to instinctively brace himself against the dashboard. He looks for another car, or an animal that may have ran in the road, but there’s nothing, everything here looks like the trees in winter, shells of its former self, no life whatsoever. He can’t understand what would make Mikhal slam on the brakes so hard. “NO, James, nothing about it was COLD. This world was being overrun by parasites, They took no note of what was going on around them. They wouldn’t listen to any warnings, not even when the message changed from good news to judgement. They laughed at us when we told them that time was up. They ridiculed us when we told them how they would die. They destroyed themselves.” It was almost like that was the entire reason Mikhal had been silent the whole trip, this man was truly “contents under pressure” and once he released this, it was like a switch went off, a calmness washes over him and his personality entirely changes. He becomes pleasant, almost bubbly. “Anyway, your assignment is going to be right here. You’ll be going through these houses, collecting anything of value to us. I’m going to get more workers for the territory, but it’s likely to be a few days before I’m back. Most of the houses have beds and sofas, if you think you need to sit. Just move some crap and take a break. Try to keep it short, as there’s so much work to be done.”

Several hours pass and James has collected a pile of electronics. Phones, computer monitors, televisions, tablets and the like. He also found a small gold locket, with pictures of a man and his wife on one side, and their two children on the other. James glances out of the window in the living room, surprised at how dark it's gotten so quickly. He sees some headlights and hears a car's engine shut off. He goes outside to see who is here, assuming that it's Mikhal again. He sees a man get out of a smaller car than the Jeep that he arrived here in, and wave. He recognizes Don Smith, the man who was there when he woke up from his decades long slumber.

“Hey brother...I'm sorry, I've always been terrible with names.” James says finally able to shake the hand of the man who brought him back to life. Don chuckles awkwardly “ no problem, James, I actually never got to tell you my name anyway. Its Brother smi- Its Don Smith.”

“Don, I got all the things I collected. I thought you would have brought a bigger vehicle to bring some of this stuff back. Some of it is pretty good.” James says with all the pride of a new hire trying to get his boss to tell him he's doing a good job. “I didn't come here for that. Brother Albert. I came to talk. To you. Can we go for a walk?”

Don walks with James, they talk about all manner of things, and Don tells him all about the final events that lead to their Judgement day, how they have begun the rebuilding process by repurposing things they find on missions like this. They speak about the high tech advancements that the Holy Assembly of the Divine Brotherhood released and how they had come to be known now, as the High Council. As they continue to walk, they find themselves by a large cliff, with a park bench. Neither man realizes that they have been walking so long that they are very close to sunrise.

“Heh” Don says, noticing the look of whimsical confusion on James’ face. “Yes, you’ve been awake for hours, after working all day, and a long drive to get here, and you don’t feel very tired. You’ll find the longer you’re around here, you don’t get tired, and you’ll need to sleep less and less.” Don continues, almost bashfully. “Now I have a question for you, we’ve talked about some pretty tense subject matter, and you still have a smile on your face. Why is that?”

James takes a deep breath, and looks at the brightening horizon as the sun begins to peek out. He glances down at the family in the locket.

“Once I leave here, I get to see my son, his wife and I get to meet my grandchildren for the first time, and spend forever with them.” The thin smile begins fading from Don’s face.

“Brother, I have some news, news you may not like, but this information ends much better than it begins.” Don says, in a new, more professional tone. “You won’t be meeting your family today, or ever. They did not make it here, they had a conformity issue.” James feels the growing lump in his throat, the heat just under his collar, and the beads of cold sweat on his forehead. “..conformity issue?” he says. It’s the first time he’s felt anger, or fear, or dread since he returned to this new world.

Don continues, “You see, we have always been instructed to not miss any meetings, as you know. As things got worse, meeting attendance became non negotiable, and after he had children, he chose to work more secularly, his field service reports were turned in more and more infrequently. The arrangement must be followed. I’m sure you understand.” Don spoke clearly and very matter of fact. He detested telling James, but there were some that came back that he felt he had to tell, almost a penance of sorts. James is devastated by this revelation-“Arrangement? My son chose to take care of his family’s needs, and that made him, and them unworthy of life? Because of a field service report?” James is coming undone more and more as he hears the words leave his mouth, sickened by all the things that Don is telling him.

“Well not just field service reports, his meeting attendance was very low as well, as I mentioned.” Don says, genuinely trying to comfort him, by qualifying these strange conditions for everlasting life. I understand this can be a lot to take in, but this new system is built on unity. We have to be unified in all things, and those who are not united, those who cannot conform, or won't conform, are not capable of contributing to the new system of things.” It's all information that James has heard his entire life, but here, in practice, the reality of the words comes to horrifying fruition.

“I don't understand, I-how can I live forever, how do i live in paradise without my family?” the tears fall in heavy streams down James face as he tries to make sense of this. “James, I don't think that anyone really knows what this place is, but I know it's not paradise. While everything that was prophesied to happen seems to have taken place, things are not the way they should be. Those of us who never died, have a different experience than those who were brought back, like you. We remember everything, and because of the trauma of it all, and maybe something else, we are capable of handling the new system. Those resurrected however, have different challenges. So the pill you took yesterday was created. Without that, you would not have been able to receive everlasting life, but there was something else.” Don stands up, preparing to leave.

“Something else?” James asks.

“While the body can live forever,” Don continues. “When faced with information like that you just received, eternal life could prove difficult, if not impossible to carry on. So this is where I tell you how this gets better. By the time the sun has risen, you won't remember any of it, You won't remember them, you won't remember the old world, No memories of children growing or wishing you met your grandchildren. The capsule removes all of it. You won't even remember this conversation. No more tears over what could have been. Maybe what should have been. You will be able to enjoy the new system of things and serve the Holy Assembly of the Divine Brotherhood with your whole heart and your whole mind and your whole soul. You will thrive here, without distraction.”

By this time, James is sitting, with his head in his hands sobbing uncontrollably, his world reeling around him. He cannot bear the weight of eternity. Not like this. Why was he even resurrected? He feels the heat of the sun on his head, as it continues to rise. He takes a deep breath and begins to calm down as he sees the sun rising. He wipes the tears from his eyes and his sobbing begins to subside. He sits quietly for a second, then he hears the Jeep he came here in as it pulls up, this time it's full of new workers. He stands up and waves at Mikhal as he shows him what he's found in the neighborhood so far, and the two share a hearty laugh. He introduces himself to the new ones, shows them what he's been doing.

His new life has begun in this new system of things, and the former things, things like his son, his daughter in law, the two grandchildren that he never met, will never be called to mind.

It is truly a life sentence, everlasting.

**It's the fear that  
keeps us here**

**Its the fear  
That keeps us here.  
They said from the platform  
The end is drawing near**

We are down to the statue's feet  
**and the evidence is clear**  
We should expect pestilence, food shortages,  
earthquakes, wars...

**Don't you watch the news, dear?**

It's all happening just as they said  
So is it worth  
Speaking out about the elder that touched you?  
Look how your silence has been rewarded-

**You're a regular pioneer!**

Maybe he still does it to other kids,  
Whenever he has a beer  
Why'd you wait so long to say something?

**Uggh! Please don't shed another tear**

How do you think the brothers feel,

**When the organization's name, YOU smear.  
Have you seen what happens to those who stand in  
opposition to the arrangement?**

**They'll massacre you, so get it in gear.**

You're no better than the rest of us.

You're not in control

Accept it- you don't steer.

We know they are monsters  
it's why we smile from ear to ear.

Keep your head down, and your voice low-  
You could be exposed for your

APOSTASY  
by a peer

We know it's all confusing,  
But It's the fear  
That keeps us here.

**awestruck**

Destruction in every direction.

Most of them just didn't agree

Couldn't stand the guilt

Couldn't "live up" to the standard

Honestly most just couldn't stand  
the hypocrisy

The fate they faced was  
unspeakable.

Even though they were familiar  
faces

A lot, we'd even call friends

Some we called family.

We didn't waver.

We weren't afraid.

Quite the opposite.

We were in Awe.

—Great Tribulation 22:18 New World  
Scriptures 2021.

**fade**

**I can't explain what was happening.  
I was sure I was dreaming-**

**I'd been working a lot  
But I'd been researching more**

**I accidentally fell asleep at the meeting.  
I woke up to see the entire congregation staring at me.  
What's the big deal? Everybody dozes off at some point sitting  
at the Kingdom Hall, right?**

**They'd locked the doors, and surrounded me.  
Some looked puzzled  
Others, frightened  
But a lot looked furious**

**I beg them to just tell me what happened, just to clear all this  
up.**

**At first no one would talk to me, even turning their backs  
when I spoke.**

**One of congregation elders, takes a nervous step towards me  
and holds up a small handheld mirror, motioning for me to  
look at my reflection.**

**Then I saw what was happening.  
I was there, but apparently not completely.**

**I had become transparent.  
And everyone could now see**

**I was fading away.**

**smoke alarm**

**I RESEARCHED. I KNEW IT WAS WRONG.**

**BUT I KNEW WE WERE IN DANGER**

**MY EYES BURNED FROM THE SMOKE**

**IT MADE OUR CLOTHES SMELL**

**IT WAS SPREADING AND I COULDN'T IGNORE IT.**

**I HAD TO SAY SOMETHING. ALL THE INFORMATION,  
ALL THE SOURCES SAID THE SAME THING.**

**YOUNG MAN APPROACHES PARENTS , SHOWING  
THEM INFORMATION ON FIRE SAFETY**

**I SHOWED THEM EVERYTHING I COULD FIND**

**THEY TOLD ME TO LEAVE,**

**AND NEVER COME BACK**



**It's where I'm supposed to be,  
This close, to the end of days.**

**Even though sometimes it seems like they don't want me there.**

**Mean old men.  
Always pulling at me  
Tearing me down  
Ripping me apart**

**Mom knew I was telling the truth  
The tears were there  
Sometimes even my stuffing would come out.**

**Mom would help me push it all in**

**Deep down.**

**Then she'd fix me up  
In her own way.  
"My words were the most hurtful"  
She'd say  
Right before she stitched my mouth shut.**

put on the new personality

I just wanted to help people..  
Now..I don't know,  
I-my assignment is settling paradise.  
But it's not like they told us.  
There is no angelic force. There's just us  
In these mechanical suits..  
Clearing land.  
Plowing roads.  
Not even checking to see who's on them  
This suit..must be malfunctioning  
I didn't think- It would kill so...inefficiently, twisted.  
creatively.  
It seemed as though the suit was trying to  
Entertain me.  
Each person it marked a goat, it became an endeavor to  
Destroy it  
Leave nothing resembling a the human it was  
If it would not accept our everlasting life  
It would be left with no life  
Not even a shred.  
The suit, was the pioneer  
I, as the soul, the breath of the everlasting life  
Of the watchtower bible and tract society  
Am become the (un) holy pioneer spirit  
Protecting everlasting life, by dealing  
Everlasting death while creating a new system  
This is paradise  
And  
I  
Can  
Never  
Want  
To  
leave.

**the silver sword**

In my tiny fingers I hold  
A thin folded piece of paper  
The future it told.

This little fist knocks on a door  
To speak of a new world,  
And what was in store

Big mountains,  
Rolling hills, even taking a nap  
By a cool refreshing fountain.

I see you moving,  
My little mind is sharpened.  
I can save you, miss  
Just open this door and I'll ask...  
“ Do you want to live in a world that looks like  
this?”

I'm here to share a message,  
One you may not have heard  
About love and kindness,  
Both gifts are available  
Even though to us, they are undeserved.

This colorful paper is a ticket to a place  
That no road can get to,  
Not even death can give chase.

I see why you hide. You're afraid I can see  
You can't take the weight of the truth that I  
carry with me.  
I can take you to a place,  
Where we can truly be free.

The life you live makes you unworthy  
But who am I to brag?  
I have to spend a lot of time with my older  
brother-  
and He likes to “hug” me.

Soon, we can live forever  
In this new system of things  
A world filled with all good and no bad,

Whatsoever!

...However

There's one small thing- I'm sorry  
to say  
You can still get there, but you'll  
have to sleep on the way

Why? Oh I thought you'd never  
ask!

Well my brotherhood has only one  
important task.

The message we share has gone  
from good news to judgement,  
No one has listened, or made  
proper adjustments.

Our job is simple, to carve out the  
life,  
Of any we find to spare them the  
horror of Armageddon  
Using only a knife.

Just open the door, and we'll make  
it quick  
Our silver blades are sharp, you  
won't even feel the stick.  
You'll wake up, refreshed in the  
new world  
Where you'll never get sick.

When you awake, there will be  
nothing to dread,  
Just clean up the bodies  
of billions, now dead.

**never  
give  
way to  
anger**

He couldn't process it  
He could feel the heat rising in his  
chest.

The rage rose in him with every  
mention of it

New Light

It was time to say something

To say something was wrong.

It was time.

But he was afraid.

His rage would calcify  
It was better this way.

The rage that should have been is gone  
Locked behind a smile-shaped cage.

This was eternity  
This was paradise.

**dream**

**a way**

**(out)**

Jason took a few minutes to look around the room. He knew that he wouldn't be able to make eye contact with them when he started talking again. At least, while they were looking down, furiously scratching notes, their eyes were off him. "I lose everything, over a dream?"

"Why don't you continue, brother." One of the elders says. Looking at him over a cheap pair of reading glasses.

He continues. "I know my eyes were closed. I was just there, I could feel the cold breeze on my face-going through my beard. I felt weightless.

That's when I realized I was flying." He glances up, then quickly back down. He felt ashamed, but he just wanted to get this over with. "Flying, but I just remember the tension I felt. I knew I was trying to get away from something." He wrings his hands anxiously. "It was thick, like the blackest oil. As soon as it touched me, it wrapped around me. It filled my mind with all the sins I'd committed."

He takes a deep breath. "It pulls me out of the sky and slams me to the ground. I don't know what's happening, but I can see where it's taking me." He pauses, trying to control his breathing.

"The, uh gateway you mentioned?" A second elder speaks up, with an artificial warm smile.

"Yes." Jason confirms. "I could see it, the oil was seeping out of the bricks, the closer I got to it, the more of it consumed me, pulling me faster into the opening. It was filling my mind with awful secrets of people around me, terrible things. It blended those with my own sins, reminding me that we were all imperfect. It was so loud. I felt it, ripping my into my mind. Changing me. It was incorporating its darkness into the very fiber of my being."

He takes a sip of water from the dusty coffee cup he was given to him before the meeting started. It has become lukewarm and not very refreshing, but it was better than talking, even if for just a few seconds.

“The opening is so dark. The oil, still filling me with its darkness tells me that I’m almost home and I need to stop fighting. So I do. Just before I’m fully sucked into this, void, it’s quiet. Peaceful, almost. Then nothing.”

“Is there anything else, son?” The third elder chimes in.

“I emerged from the void. Dressed for the meeting. I can hear-“ he hears his voice quiver and feels the lump in his throat. He collects himself. “-I can hear my smile, ripping the flesh on my face. It’s so painful. That’s when I realize it. The darkness that exists in this gateway, this void-has bonded to me.” The silence is deafening. Jason focuses on the hum of the fluorescent lights just to make sure he hasn’t lost his hearing. He has to say something, if for no other reason to ensure he can still hear.

“That’s when I woke up”.

The three elders share a glance with each other then put their tablets down.

“Brother Alexander, I know it took a lot for you to come talk to us today, staying so late after the meeting to recount this ordeal, it really shows your commitment to the arrangement. Situations like these are never easy, but I have to ask an important question just so we can be clear in our counsel.” He takes off the gold metal reading glasses and folds them. Placing them on the table in front of him.

“Of course. I understand.” Jason says leaning forward to show how intently he’s listening.

“In the beginning of this dream, you talked anonymously feeling the cold.” The elder says, reading his handwritten notes. “About this time, you mentioned the wind blowing through your beard hair.”

“Yes, I remember that.” Jason says.

“Why would you have a beard? Do you dream of going against the righteous standards of the organization?”

**the ballad  
of  
the first faithful  
indiscreet  
slave**

A desert sandstorm rages, with the great pyramid in the distance. His guide grows fearful. Superstitions get the better of the guide as first he begs Charles to turn back, promising to take him another day. Surely, he feels that this mission is doomed to take them both, if they do not submit to it.

“The scriptures speak of a great storm in the sea, that the Lord calmed, and said that if we too had faith we could call back the waters.” Charles says his faith in his own words, unwavering.

“There is no reward without sacrifice. We will move forward knowing this is a spirit led mission”

“The spirit that leads you requires death. You will not spill the blood of my camels, or myself to quench your God's thirst. If you return to the tents, I would gladly take you all the way to the entrance to the pyramid, but today the desert demands we stop.” the guide says to him, begging him to listen to reason, even though he knew he would not.

“Ye of little faith. I will press forward, as my Lord commands.”

Charles ventures into the burning howling desert, eventually getting to the base of the pyramid, and through a small doorway on the side.

He navigates the labyrinth reading hieroglyphs and comparing them to the notes he brought. He runs his fingers across a small glyph that looks like a silhouette of a watchtower, and pushes it in, opening a passage beneath his feet. He plummets to the bottom, unconscious.

He awakes to find the room lit, by means he could not explain-he gathers himself looking around the room, full of treasures and symbols of all kinds.

**He walks around exploring the trinkets, and all things in the room. He finds a small mirror that has what looks to be his face etched on the back of it. He picks up the mirror and gazes at his reflection.**

**He feels something heavy land on his shoulder, and much to his surprise he sees a hand, black and rotten, adorned with rings and other trinkets.**

**He falls to his knees in fear, looking at the countenance of the giant that stands before him.**

**“Where have you come from my child?” The voice of the giant is thunderous, and it speaks directly into his mind, nearly splitting Charles from the inside out.**

**Charles falls to his knees. Speaking to the giant**

**“I implore you, oh timeless one-**

**I am the Shepard of the flock of men, women and children. Please align our message with yours, grow our numbers so that we can carry your message to every corner of the earth.**

**Teach me to enslave the flock, and slaughter those who will not submit to your will.”**

**new light  
too bright**

New light  
So bright  
Take delight  
Your faith  
Requires  
No sight.

The change  
So slight.  
Let's not even think  
about it  
Tonight.

Sleep tight  
Don't fight.  
Many have died  
believing they were right.

It's the might  
Of the governing body  
That will deliver the smite  
To any who question  
Their insight.

You're wrong.  
They're right  
Does it really matter that  
The spiritual food they provide  
Tastes like shite?

It does not!  
So just take a bite,  
Alright?

This system is in its twilight,  
and you'll be much happier  
to be counted among the living,  
than burned with the dead,  
Amirite?

It is our reward,  
Our eternal plight,  
To lay here and listen to our bodies sizzle,  
for eternity  
Under the warmth  
Of this new light.

**beef**

**DECADES OF FREE LABOR  
COERCED SUBMISSION  
SHITTY DOCTRINE  
YOU'VE PARTICIPATED IN  
ETHNIC CLEANSING**

**RACISM**

**CHILD ABUSE**

**HUMAN SACRIFICE**

**KEPT IN STABLES  
ONLY EATING ON YOUR FIELDS  
CHEWING THE SAME GRASS FOREVER.**

**YOU TREAT HUMANS LIKE CATTLE  
WHO STRIVE TO BE CALLED SHEEP  
YET  
YOUR BEEF WITH ME.  
IS THAT I DISAGREE?**