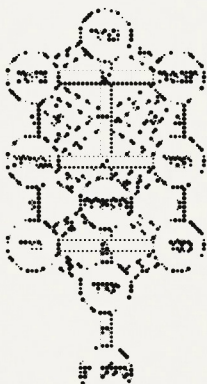
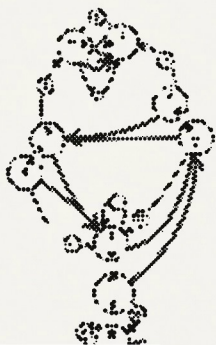


Null

Short story



the month

with no door

NULLZINE NO. 02 · PART I OF II

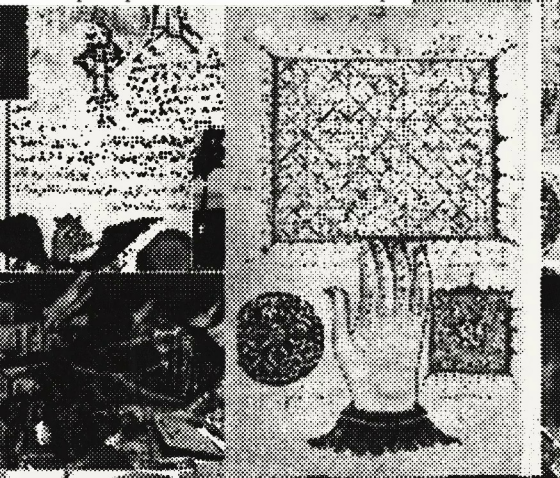
During the month in question, Mousa stopped waking up in the normal sense.

He opened his eyes. Yes. He left sleep. More or less.

But waking did not deliver him into the world.

He had been using K. Not for fun, exactly, maybe escape, but escape was the wrong word too.

Escape implies a direction, a **door**, a map.





K was whiter than that. Flatter. It took him **nowhere**.

It thinned the glue here. It felt as if the hidden staff inside the senses had gone home early and left the building **unlocked**.

The eye still saw. The ear still heard. The skin still registered cold, fabric, water, stair rails, cigarette smoke.

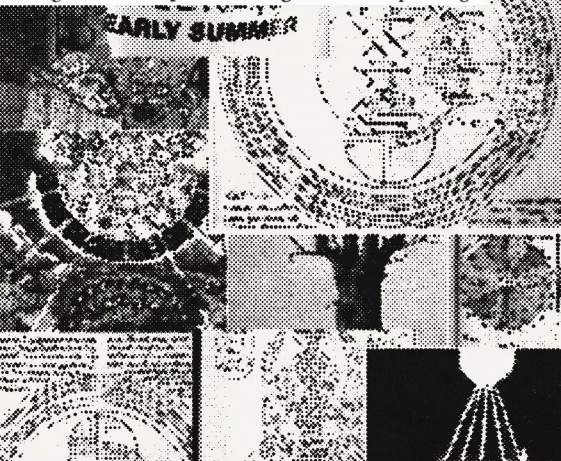
But the little **treaty** between sensation and meaning had weakened.

The world kept coming in. It just no longer came in finished.

He wrote that down.

He did not expect writing to save him. That would have been sentimental. He wrote because the sentences began before he did.

The first notebook entry, if he later remembered it right, said: **K opens nothing.** It removes padding.





Then: **The day is assembled.**

Then, later, in smaller letters, as if somebody were listening through the wall: **Reality is a repeated agreement.**

He hated how that sounded. Too neat. Too online.

Too much like something a damaged man would say while staring at a ceiling stain and pretending he had broken through to first principles.

But the sentence stayed, out of stubbornness more than wisdom.

On the fourth or fifth day, maybe the sixth, symbols
began to accumulate.

A crack above the window. Branching.

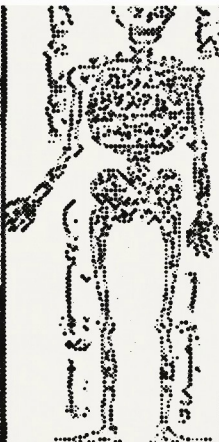
A cup-ring on the table. Then another.

A dark knot in the wood floor.

The tram wires over the street. Crossing and crossing.

The green pharmacy cross blinking in the distance.

Three flashes. Pause. Three flashes. Pause.





He had read enough bad and partial things about **Kabbalah** to be dangerous to himself.

Too little to understand it, enough to misuse it, enough to let the ten spheres drift over whatever surface needed structure.

Ceiling crack as **tree**. Table stain as **sephirah**. Hallway light as **path**. Drain as **abyss**.

The whole apartment wanted to **diagram** itself.

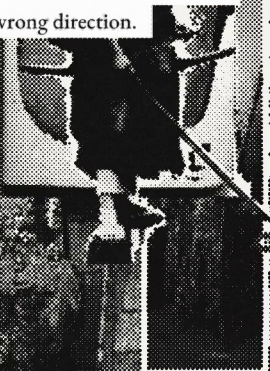
This frightened him less than it should have, which was its own problem, because fear would have meant distance.

Fear would have meant: this is happening to me.

But there was no good me-position left, only moving intensities. Near. Far. Sharpened. Muted. Charged. Drained.

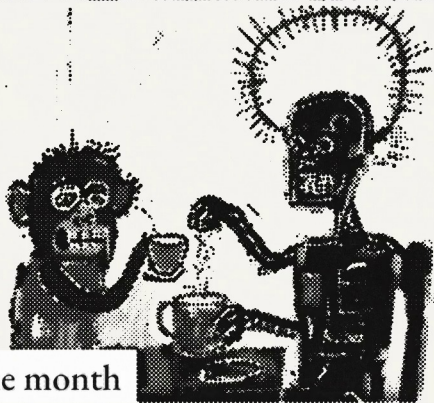
The room was not haunted. It was **over-read**. It had become too legible in the wrong direction.

continued in part ii



Null

Short story



the month

with no door

NULLZINE NO. 02 • PART II OF II

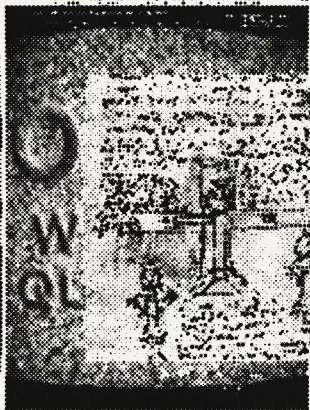
He tried to correct for this. He told himself: **stop**.

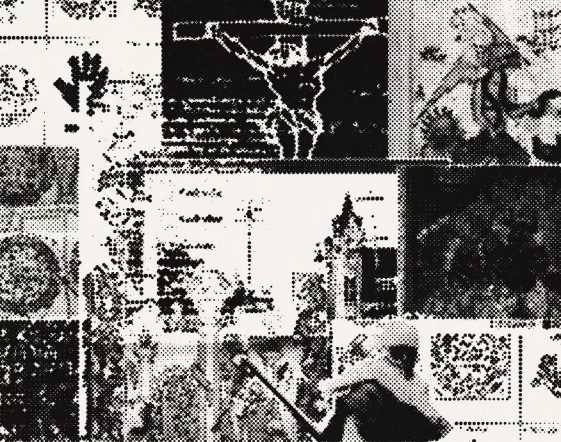
It is only a crack. Only a lamp. Only bad sleep. Only chemistry. Only Berlin winter.

Only your own head folding in on itself again.

But **only** had lost force.

And besides, what was only chemistry? A phrase for people who think chemistry is not already **metaphysics** in work clothes.



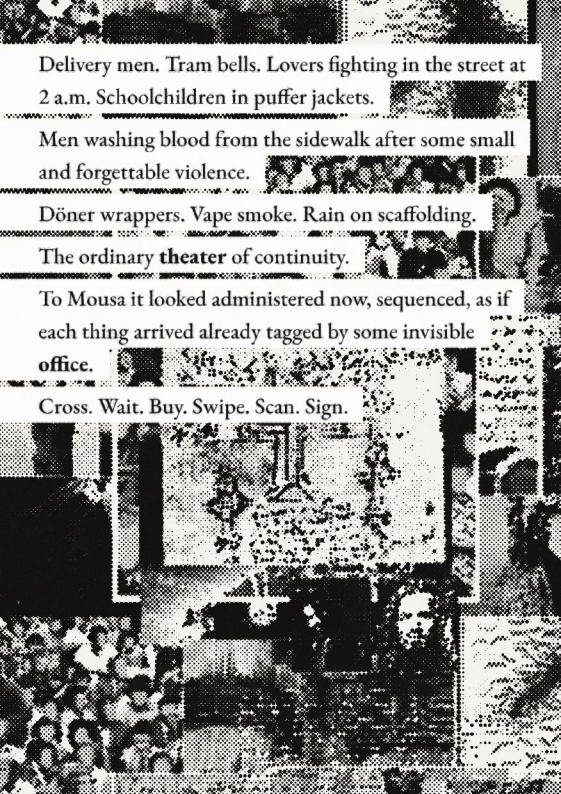


By the second week he no longer trusted categories with hard edges.

Drug. Symbol. Idea. Hallucination. Archetype.
Memory. Myth.

They were different things, he thought, but they bled into one another under pressure, and most people survived by not noticing the **bleed**.

The city outside kept moving. That was **obscene**.



Delivery men. Tram bells. Lovers fighting in the street at
2 a.m. Schoolchildren in puffer jackets.

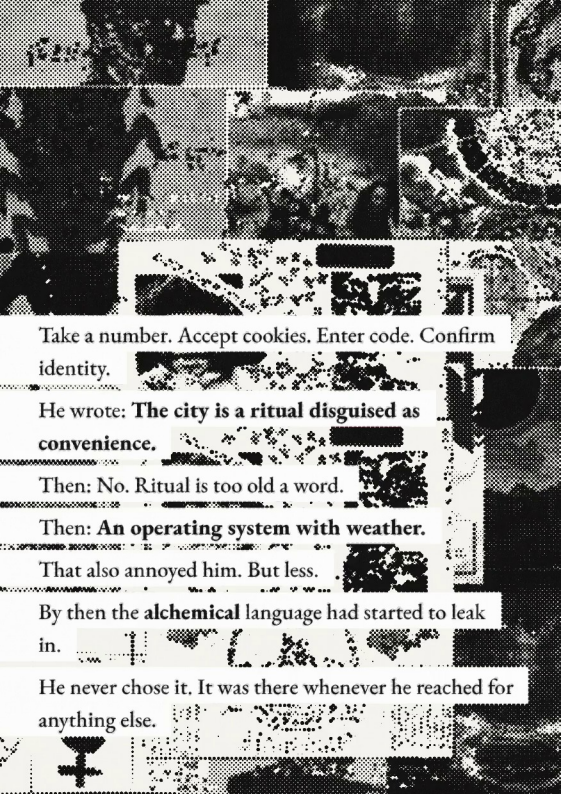
Men washing blood from the sidewalk after some small
and forgettable violence.

Döner wrappers. Vape smoke. Rain on scaffolding.

The ordinary **theater** of continuity.

To Mousa it looked administered now, sequenced, as if
each thing arrived already tagged by some invisible
office.

Cross. Wait. Buy. Swipe. Scan. Sign.



Take a number. Accept cookies. Enter code. Confirm identity.

He wrote: **The city is a ritual disguised as convenience.**

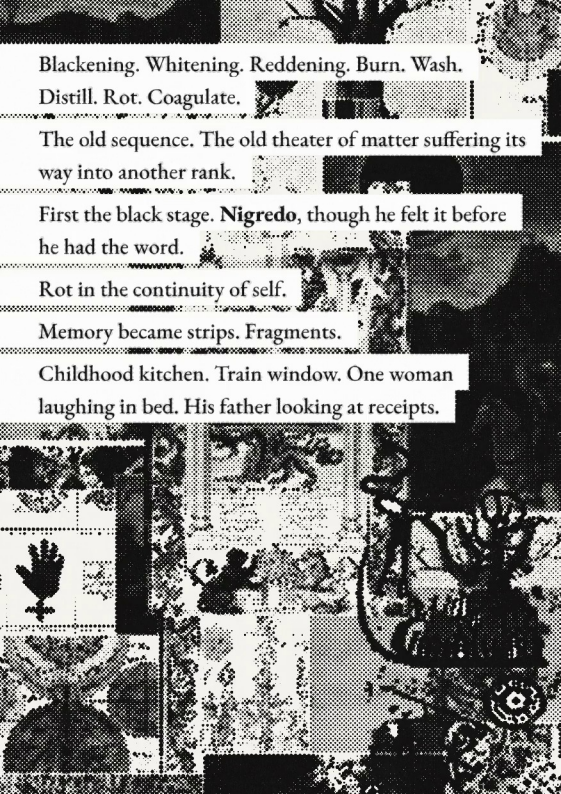
Then: No. Ritual is too old a word.

Then: **An operating system with weather.**

That also annoyed him. But less.

By then the **alchemical** language had started to leak in.

He never chose it. It was there whenever he reached for anything else.



Blackening. Whitening. Reddening. Burn. Wash.
Distill. Rot. Coagulate.

The old sequence. The old theater of matter suffering its
way into another rank.

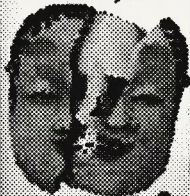
First the black stage. **Nigredo**, though he felt it before
he had the word.

Rot in the continuity of self.

Memory became strips. Fragments.

Childhood kitchen. Train window. One woman
laughing in bed. His father looking at receipts.

Melanie
Coulsson
Juni meque



A school corridor. A dead cat by the canal.

Skin. Hospital light. Shame. Heat. Prayer. Pornography.
Metro announcements.

The little films detached from sequence, and floated
beside one another, equal in weight.

That was the **horror**. No hierarchy. No before and after
with moral force.

Then the **white** phase. The pale one. The stripped
one.

The city became clean in a terrible way. Plastic shone too much. Supermarkets were lit like clinics.

His own hands looked less like hands, and more like tools that had been assigned to him temporarily.

The skin on his fingers appeared almost rented.

END OF PART II



NULLZINE NO. 02

nullzine.com