

wisdom.

But the sentence stayed, out of stubbornness more than

broken through to first principles.

while starting at a ceiling stain and pretending he had
Too much like something a damaged man would say

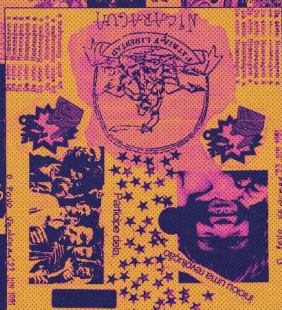
He hated how that sounded. Too near. Too online.

agreement.

listening through the wall: Reality is a repeated

Then, later, in smaller letters, as if somebody were

Then: The day is assembled.



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

A crack above the window. Branching.

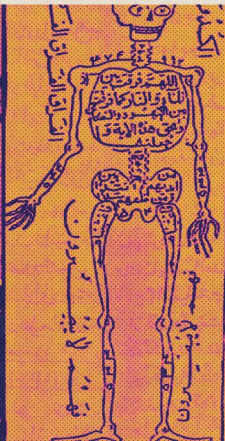
A cup-ring on the table. Then another.

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.



right, said: **K opens nothing**. It removes padding.

The first notebook entry, if he later remembered it

before he did.

been sentimental. He wrote because the sentences began

He did not expect writing to save him. That would have

He wrote that down.

finished.

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



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



had weakened.

But the little **treaty** between sensation and meaning

smoke.

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

building **unlocked**.

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

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



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

escape, but escape was the wrong word too.

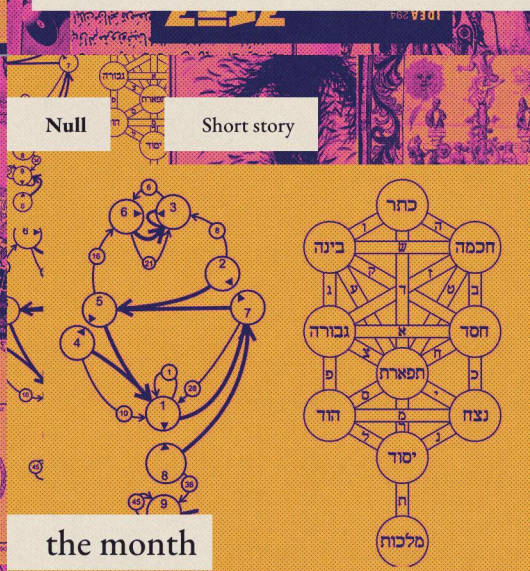
He had been using K. Not for fun, exactly, maybe

But waking did not deliver him into the **world**.

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

up in the normal sense.

During the month in question, Mousa stopped waking



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Short story

the month

with no door

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anything else.
He never chose it. It was there whenever he reached for
in.
By then the **alchemical** language had started to leak

That also annoyed him. But less.
Then: **An operating system with weather.**

Then: No. Ritual is too old a word.

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

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

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

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

The ordinary **theater** of continuity.
Döner wrappers. Vape smoke. Rain on scaffolding.

and forgettable violence.
Men washing blood from the sidewalk after some small
2 a.m. Schoolchildren in puffer jackets.

Delivery men. Tram bells. Lovers fighting in the street at

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

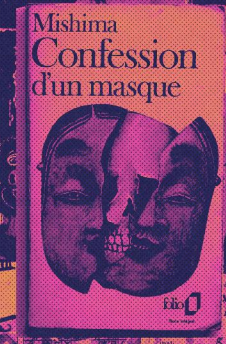
The old sequence. The old theater of matter suffering its
way into another rank.

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.



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

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

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

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

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

But **only** had lost force.

Only your own head folding in on itself again.

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

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

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

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Short story



the month
with no door

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