

The Resurrection of Gene Danae

by Brims

*"I am not the resurrection or the life;
I'm nobody ... and you'll never know me."*
[Unknown proverb]

At the end of a long and productive workday, followed by a short nightcap of brandy and cream, I, Gene Danae, President and CEO of Houston-Baker Petroleum, wrote the following personal account of mine; but not before much apprehension and conciliatory guidance from my closest advisors (and admirers)—my dear mother, Mitō (美東), who, well into her seventies, doesn't look a day over 50; and my dear father, Xandy (short for Alexander), whose hard-work ethic, diligence and financial prowess built Houston-Baker from the ground up.

With that said, and having my parents on the forefront of my thoughts, this extraordinary and remarkable account of mine was not only written as a tribute for my parents (who put all their effort into raising my twin brother and I; and further—beyond all expectations—afforded us the opportunity to lead Houston-Baker into the next millennium), but even more so, this account is a revelation, celebration and declaration of me, myself and I—kind-of like Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself," but not really, not even close, because *my* song is different ... rhythmically, stylistically and linguistically.

For someone acquainted with Whitman, the differences in rhythm and style are quite obvious. But why mention linguistics?

Even though "Song of Myself" and this account, "The Resurrection of Gene Danae," were originally penned in English, I say they're linguistically different because of the

methods we both chose to divulge the discourses of our heart, mind and soul. Methods near impossible to understand, as we, in our own accord, sought explanations for our own devices.

Thus, through these lenses, it's pretty damn obvious we spoke, wrote, and even thought in different languages ... dare I say languages of fire! ... Of metallurgists! ... Of mentalists! ... And of alchemists! ... Like those who flourished in Greco-Roman Egypt, and before ... way, way before ... in the creation of the stars and planets ... who's words are still here, ever-present, amidst, and comfortably comingling, with the cosmic background radiation.

Walt and I, observing, absorbing and wielding vernacular swords with skills and expertise wrought from the *Corpus Hermeticum*—accumulated and acquired through the wisdom, knowledge and understanding of the divine, the cosmos, our mind, and nature ... of earth, water, air, fire, ether, sulfur, mercury and salt—lots and lots of salt. After all, where would the seasoning be without it? Our words would be flavorless.

And yet, it must be noted, Whitman's declarations and mine, however earnest and sincere they may be, are different, even diametrically opposed, because this account is about *me* and my universe, and *not* Walt Whitman and his.

Sorry, Wally—in this story *I* am god.

How can I claim such a thing? With words. You know that. For *my* readers, I'll demonstrate this again (and use capitalization and bold print for emphasis):

I AM GOD!

See, it's that simple. And like so many pharaohs of ancient Egypt have said, "So let it be written, so let it be done."

So I did, and it is. It's good, too—damn good. So good in fact that I'll declare it again:

I AM GOD!

Not to mention that about the same time I came up with this declaration, some out-of-towner—a stranger from a strange land (I believe he said he was from *Heinland*)—came up to me in a coffee shop, and just before I told him he cut me in line, he said something that made me hold my tongue; something that I've never heard a line-cutter say before.

"Gene," he said to me, while reaching to shake my hand with all the familiarity of a life-long friend, "thou art god."

"Oh really?" I rejoined, skeptically, though interested in what he was proclaiming.

"Yes," he reassured me, as one does to someone who already knows. Then—as if I knew what was coming next, my flesh tingling with a forbearance of a sixth sense—I felt a surge of energy work its way up my arm and into my chest, as he added, "Do you *grok* this (or something to that affect)?" And to be honest, even though I was staring directly at him, I'm not even sure I saw his lips moving when he communicated this to me. (It seemed trivial at the time, but now that I've reflected upon it, I'm not sure *how* I received his communication.) And Because I didn't know what "Grok" meant, or so I thought, I shrugged my shoulders; to which he, infinitely satisfied with my remark, smiled eternally.

He was an odd character, I'll tell you that—striking, but odd. His smile persisting more than any smile I've ever seen before (even more than Thích Quảng Đức's—that legendary monk who, in a defiance act of self immolation, set himself ablaze among speechless onlookers and bystanders, who will never forget their visit to that busy road intersection of Saigon). And after that, the stranger whom I'll *never* forget

ordered coffee for the both of us (somehow knowing my exact drink), smiling more and more, his eyes burning with all the intensity of a supernova.

At the risk of disenchanting our short-lived encounter, I'll just say that the rest of it went something like this:

I took a swig of my coffee; he took a swig of his. I said, "Nice meeting you, but I got to go." To which he responded, "I know." Then, without saying anything further, he handed me a crystal and walked towards the door.

"Excuse me sir," I said, not knowing his name. But he didn't respond. So I held up the crystal, as if to gesture, "What am I supposed to do with this?"

He kept walking and smiling ... and smiling ... and smiling. So I just stared, convicted of something, but said nothing more.

Anyway, Wally, if you're reading this (and perhaps rolling in your grave), that's how I know I'm god. I'd say I'll explain the rest when I get to where you are, but something tells me I'll never get that opportunity. Perhaps it's because we will always be in parallel universes. I don't know.

And to you, my dear reader, if this made no sense whatsoever, don't worry about it. It's fictitious. I made it all up; just to get a reaction out of you.

Did it work?

Well, regardless if it did or not, let me continue with my account, which *is* absolutely true.

Actually, one more question before I continue: Do you think I'll ever see Wally? Like him, I'm a humanist ... and I also believe that divinity pervades all nature and humanity. I call him Wally and jest, I know, but he was a divine human being.

Now back to the account ...

This account also serves as a remembrance for my brother (also named Gene), who, through unforeseen circumstances, passed away long before his prime. And sadly, my dear father, who was the apple of my eye, also passed away; he and my brother were among the deceased when the narrow bridge on old Holman highway collapsed into the gorge last year that cold and wintery day. (May their souls rest in peace ... wherever they may be.)

Now, because I've told you this, I don't want you to get all teary eyed or think that I'm soliciting any sympathy—that shit's for the devil. But because the devil is in the details of this account, I had to tell you; their death, having triggered repressed memories of long ago, became the catalyst for my transformation, which in turn, led me to write this account.

As far as the aftermath of the accident, there was nothing anyone could've done for my father, who's Lincoln-Continental became his coffin; but because my brother somehow escape that sinking sarcophagus (though not his death), his drowned body had floated to the surface. From there, he was retrieved and taken to the morgue, where the mortician (whom I had influence over) provided me with limited access to my brother—access I used to commit an unthinkable act.

* * *

As you read this account, I hope to intrigue you to an unapproachable point of curiosity—in such a way that, through unconscious intercession, your first read may be nothing more than a perfunctory tease; which hopefully, will compel you to return to this account time and time again. And yet, I'm also unabashedly aware, like a lightning blast that strips a tree of its bark, that from every possible angle this account reeks of inconceivability ... to the point of an inescapable and

unbearable stench ... one in which flies swarm towards at an alarming rate to colonize their offspring.

With that said, keep in mind, even from a pile of shit, life springs forth.

It's a strange way of putting this, I know, but what in life, at some point or another, doesn't stink? If you can't think of anything, well ... when you wake up tomorrow morning, your breath will remind you, especially if you smoke tobacco like me.

Thus, because of my account's putrid fragrance (and admittedly, my morning breath) that's akin to smeared road-kill rotting on the highway under a merciless scorching sun, I've written this account in such a way as to persuade you through an emotional rollercoaster that rises, falls, twists and turns throughout a spectrum full of humor, pathos and cathartic passion; which hopefully [and it damn well better, because I sacrificed a whole damn weekend to write this], will not only attune your senses to the conceivability of this account (however irrational this may seem), but also to its necessity in understanding—as far as your mind allows you to—my impressions and personifications of immortality, however flawed my mentality may be.

As opposed to the *unknown* writer of the epigraph I opened with (whose Identity I may know, due in part to pseudepigraphy), if I *were* the resurrection and the life, and somebody that you've always known ... most likely, it would be because I have exercised everything at my disposal to resurrect my dear brother, starting with the mantra that has provided my daily hope since his passing: "Soon, my dear brother, you and I will be one."

But before I take you to the point of no return, in full disclosure, using the limited powers I *do* possess, and the predestined timing of the account I'm unraveling before you—

naked and raw in all its conceptions—I'll have you know that I didn't *write* all of this. I'm not that smart. I *dictated* most it to Isabella St. Claire—my secretary, confidante and partner-in-crime—who wonderfully *transcribed* it for me.

[Isabella: Thank you so much for that night—it will never be forgotten. Nor will you my dearest love. In fact, you know too well the part you played in ensuring our partnership and legacy.]

* * *

Initially, like so many writers before me, at the cost of being told I was crazy—or worse, insane or mad—due to the claim I was asserting (and am still proclaiming from the glass rooftop of my penthouse), I was going to write this entire account myself, and pen it under a pseudonym that—guilty as charged—I've used many times before (and yet, won't reveal due to the nature of many controversial stories I have flourishing in circulation).

Yet, this work—this personal and, until now, private account of mine—had to be shared openly and honestly from the first blot of ink, to the drying of the quill. And I had to do this quickly, because the quill I was wielding, which felt like a hot rod of iron in my hand (much like the writing instrument Homer used to pen the *Iliad*), was, whether you believe this or not, plucked from the wing of Zeus, as he, disguised as a swan, violently raped Leda.

And yet, I'm not even sure Zeus noticed my theft, because he, like any guy in the heat of passion, was focused on spilling his manhood, or rather godhood, into the gut of the prize he claimed as his own. I guess when you're a god you can do whatever the fuck you want, including fucking whoever you want. And he did (or so the writers of his accounts tell me).

But I digress ... and even write this off as spoil and plunder of war ... because my mind, caught up in its own existential crisis, had to give an account—this account—of the battle I was waging against the gods created by the fancies of so many writers before me.

My claim of attacking Zeus is real ... and unique. After all, how many writers have had the fortune of penning their stories with a quill that has rubbed up against a god's rape victim ... a quill that I, before making my escape, tickled, with teasing strokes, the pink goose flesh between the victim's legs? Given, you'll find no physical evidence of my intrusion into this ravishing case of bestiality; but, like so many gods of human creation, I accomplished this within the battlefield of my mind.

Thus, because my soul—anguished and detained in a labyrinth built by the likes of the cunning and legendary artificer, Daedalus—has suffered long enough ... some days for no particular reason, other than the myths I've created with my own imagination ... myths that reside far outside the realm of human reasoning. And because of this—dare I say “bullshit” I've concocted through countless nights of holding myself captive by my own damn devices, I hold a grudge against Daedalus, a craftsman I've never met. But nonetheless, he and my imaginations are real to me ... so my grudge and anguish festers to the point of a boil that can no longer be ignored.

Oh Daedalus, the length you have gone to ensnare King Minos' Minotaur ... and now me, simply because that beast and I are different from everyone else. But I'm no beast or monster! Nor am I a half-breed offspring of man and animal. I'm entirely human, or so I would like to believe. As far as this goes, do I even need belief to declare what I am?

Sure, I may have altered the biological composition of my internal and external organs to satisfy the yearnings of my brother and I—and yes, I may have even done so without my

brother's consent, but he had already breathed his last breath before my consolidation efforts.

One might suggest that a lifeless cadaver is nothing more than dead flesh that worms feed upon until they—the worms—the bait that they are, used by many fishermen to this day, are placed on a hook to lure and catch a meal that keeps a family alive for another day. So I thought to myself, was there anything I could do for my dead brother before the worms fed upon his dead carcass?

As it was, there was *something* I could do, if only to prolong his manhood. And I did. And we'll get to that, but first, I have to explain, beyond explainable reasons, myself to Daedalus, as if he were the one holding me captive:

Daedalus, aside from what you may think, or what you may have been told, what my brother and I have become is entirely human—and no animal flesh was used or tested in the process of our transformation—not to mention that our parents, and our parents' parents, ad infinitum, were also entirely human.

As evidence, trace DNA of the Danae family lineage rests securely in an ancient sarcophagus in a vault deep beneath the structure of Houston-Baker tower. And, as you may know, my father and grandfather, on one of their many trips to Luxor, acquired that sarcophagus shortly before the construction of the Houston-Baker tower.

Gene, Gene, I remonstrated myself at this point. Get a hold of yourself. You don't have to explain yourself to anyone, let alone Daedalus. King Minos doesn't care about you either. They, too, like your father and brother, are dead.

And yet, if not to Daedalus, I felt obligated to reminisce to you, my dear reader, concerning times of old. That is, in reference to the ages of the Zodiac and their influence on myths and religious narratives, as the earth has

circumnavigated the precession of the equinoxes, from the time of ... lets say of Adam and Eve ... wherein the terrestrial and celestial inhabitants of the earth have observed the personification of the rise and fall of ...

- The Twins (Gemini), who are not only represented as Castor and Pollux, but many other mythological entities, including Cain and Abel ...

- And after an age, of The Bull (Taurus), which Moses burned in a smoldering fire after smashing the Ten Commandments he received from the God of Abraham ...

- And after that, of The Ram (Aries), which Abraham sacrificed instead of his son Isaac, as an offering to appease this same God ...

- And after that, the Fish (Pisces), which Christ, the son of this God, used as a device to feed a hungry multitude, and then lure twelve disciples to preach the gospel He was proclaiming.

I mention these astrological entities within the constraints of the mythological and religious narratives, because none of those personified astrological entities were in my lineage, or this current expression of my own design. That is, I am not half-bull (like the Minotaur), half-ram (like Pan), half-fish (like Triton), or, as far as this goes, half of any other astrological entity, like so many hybrid-creatures of old.

In fact, I have no connection to any of them, save the Water Bearer (Aquarius), who, with the liberal outpouring of his water-turned-wine, like Dionysius whom I so admire, intoxicated me to the point of invincibility; where upon I, with the assistance of other *human* companions and the advancements in medical science, reunited my brother and I in a joyous and unforgettable state of health, to include removing one of his ribs and inserting it inside myself.

And yet, now that I think about it, my brother and I are twins and, coincidentally Gemini. But we are not mythological creatures ... we are of *pure* human descent.

Thus, in retrospect, and in summary, if that's even possible at this point of the account, in light of my fanciful appetites and regeneration efforts—regardless of my preconceived notions and hesitations—having Isabella St. Claire not only transcribe and interpret this account for me [which, admittedly, becomes stranger and stranger by the moment], but also to assist in its very excavation from caverns, like abandoned mine-shafts, buried deep within my soul, was probably the best option for retrieving and attempting to recount to you, my dear reader, or to anyone who is prepared to receive this—the account and methodology, through means unbeknownst to me until recently, of how I resurrected my dear brother; who, through obscure grammaticism of spelling, was named Gene (G-e-n-e), and I, before our union, through the predisposed rationing of gender, was named Jeanne (J-e-a-n-n-e).

Yet thankfully, beyond words of my long-winded palate, and distorted imagination, being more than just a parrot, this clever and distinguished young lady, Isabella St. Claire, not only took the caterpillar I was professing to be, but also transformed me into the butterfly she always thought me to be; and because of this—perhaps during my metamorphosis she oversaw and assisted me with—she took the liberty to embellish [in brackets] select actions of mine and of the surrounding environment—my penthouse.

* * *

On this most-peculiar night, my penthouse, which I feel necessary to expound upon at this time, was, by no mere coincidence (other than being directly above the office of my *former* self), dimly lit with scented candles, scattered with rose-petals and streaming the pleasant sounds of Mozart,

Beethoven, Bach and Chopin over a state-of-the-art voice-controlled sound system: that, when played on the pool-balcony, transforms its hearers to other dimensions, as music sweeps through their clothes and resonates all throughout their beings ... then over the waters, off the balcony and into the air, high-above the portentous city below glowing in a purple haze ...

A haze that ... far from being natural, through no fault of its own, has become venomously toxic, embalming a city already poisoned by pretentious elitists who hide behind the sheen of satin smoking-jackets: a sheen which I myself am intimately familiar with, as the frictionless-sway of my smoke-tinged jacket teases the luxurious silk underwear groping my genitals.

To these elitists, especially those whose varnished skin seemingly protects them from this glow's harmful radiation, I have no pardon, because I'm among their chief-disillusioned residents.

And yet, this glow that we've created ... this inorganic intoxication and hyper-imposed artificiality of humanities demise ... is not a burden as one might think, but an inspiration—at least to those of us who live high above its harmful reach, outside the glass encasement of society's confinement.

And even though I live far above this orb, I'll occasionally admit that I'm not proud of the view of the disaster I've helped to foster through my industry. But because I believe myself to be where I'm supposed to be (at least for the time being), I find myself completely ignoring its effects, so long as I can continue my current state of affairs with Isabella St. Claire—specifically, partaking in the bliss of ambiance of our momentous collaboration.

As to what happens after the revelation of my account—well, that’s a different matter altogether. Let my accusers come forth. And I hope that, with everything that makes me who I am and with everything that’s at stake, Isabella is not one of these accusers. But if she is, so be it—bound me and take me away. She is a rightful judge, a pure and unadulterated soul. And as a matter of fact, the more I’m with her the more she convinces me; which is why I should allow her to sway me more, by tuning my ears to the blues music she is tempting me with ... music that, like the soil of the earth, grounds its listeners to the path that she—without restraint, guile or deceit—so graciously walks upon.

* * *

Between dictating and transcribing, Isabella and I had playful and stimulating conversations. During one of them, she began rhythmically tapping her thighs, and with the voice of a distinguished Blues singer she belted out this impromptu song:

*“Oh Gene, baby,
You don’t know where I’ve been.
And you may think I’m crazy, baby,
But these blues—the soul of my people—
Have made possible my encounter with you.
Oh Gene, my high-rise baby,
You don’t know where I’ve been ...”*

And she sang and drank and danced the night away—so much so, that I forgot all about Mozart, Beethoven, Bach and Chopin.

* * *

The following day, sober and recounting the previous nights’ events, as I began reading the transcript Isabella St. Claire so delicately grafted, I was initially caught off guard—

even betrayed—surprised by her intrusion of my personal chronicle.

Miss St. Claire had transcribed for me on many other occasions, but never—not even once—had she added any of her own words (at least before suggesting a recommendation, which I usually took). But this time, she, fully aware of what she was doing (though perhaps intoxicated by my advances), liberally and deliberately added a substantial amount of material without my approval. Even when she bid me goodnight that evening, tipsy and telling me everything, she didn't mention a word about this, which puzzled me further.

Why would she alter my words! I thought. And yet, I knew the moment I opened my heart and mouth and spoke them to her, that they—no matter how much I cherished and proclaimed them to be mine—were *no longer* my words.

Oh, the restraint she must have felt! ... As she left my penthouse ... laid her fragile head upon her pillow ... awoke to the smell of brewing coffee ... to the felling of all the anticipation in the world.

And to think, all this time, I was unaware of the complex nature, of the agony, angst and ecstasy, of my dear Isabella St. Claire.

And now, after having read the transcript in its entirety and dwelling on infinite reasons for her insertions, I, no longer hiding behind a veil, decided wholeheartedly to leave most of her observations intact [including the brackets].

And let me tell you what: she was pleased, to say the least, her face glowing with satisfaction. And so was mine. In fact, after having read and understood what she wrote, I was compelled to insert some of my own observations of that memorable night.

In this finished product, since she used [square] brackets, I could've placed my insertions in (round), {curly} or <angled> brackets; but I decided to follow suit, not to mention I didn't want to stereotype our sexes through symbols, as in [square] for males and {curly} for females. So, as to what observations are entirely hers or mine ... well, quite honestly, our insertions became blurred in the final draft.

Nevertheless, I'm confident that some of my more-inquisitive readers may (and some I expect you to) be able to dissect the origination of our fancies, especially those of you who know Miss St. Claire, or who have read (perhaps through some misfortune) my novel *Delusions of an Unimportant Maestro*, or novelette *Immoral Grounds*.

And with that, the cat is out of the bag—so much for pseudonyms and pseudepigraphy.

* * *

How our night unfolded ...

"Are you ready, Isabella," I said, sipping the last of my brandy and cream.

She nodded and we walked towards the desk in my study. There, while she situated herself in front of the desk, I loaded my handcrafted meerschaum pipe with a medium blend of tobacco, and then sat comfortably in a traditional button-tufted swivel chair.

"Do you mind?" I asked, gesturing at my pipe.

"Not at all," she responded.

"Would you like to smoke, too?" I added, pointing to a spare pipe and a humidor of cigars.

“Not at all,” she responded again. “But honestly, I don’t mind. My father smoked a pipe for years. Besides, I got this to keep me company.” She held up her Brandy and cream, then added, “I’m ready when you are.”

I struck a match and it burst into a brilliant yellow-orange flame, which I used to stoke my pipe. After I exhaled, I rejoined with, “Let’s proceed.”

“What shall I title this?” she asked.

After a slow-long drag and a bloom of smoke, I said, “I haven’t given it much thought ... perhaps, ‘The Strange ... or Extraordinary ... Account of Jeanne or Gene Danae.’”

“Have you given any of this much thought?” she said, realizing that this was going to be a long night.

“More than I’d like to imagine,” I said. “I just never thought I’d have to name it.”

“Shall I leave it blank?”

“For now,” I said to move things along, “just put ‘The Account of Jeanne Danae.’”

* * *

The [Strange/Extraordinary] Account of Jeanne [Gene] Danae
[as transcribed by Isabella St. Claire]:

After what I remembered as a blissful night of debauchery [puffs pipe] ... I awoke in a state of excruciating pain [puffs again]. I—[stammers a bit]—was confused beyond my reasoning, and yet ... I was alert to the fact ... that I ... was experiencing the reality of my wildest dreams and cruelest nightmares [puffs]. I say both—dreams and nightmares—because what I experienced in this awakening ... and the veracity of my new disposition [puffs] ... which rather

unceremoniously will unfold in this narrative [puffs] ... was a vivid spectrum of obscure awareness from [looks around the room] ... the crown of ecstasy to the heels of terror—and even far beneath it [puffs], deep into the pit of despair, that no one—man, woman, or any other gender that has or will evolve in the course of humanity—should ever have to be subjected to what I was [puffs].

[There's a pause; I, Isabella St. Claire, assure my boss, Gene Danae, that I'm getting it all, and we continue.]

And be assured [puffs], that I don't believe myself to be of any special nature because I *have* experienced this; nor am I insinuating that I'm the only one that this may have happened to, or will happen to. But ... because it *was* me [puffs]—and me is all I can vouch for [puffs]—I'm giving you my account. Take it or leave it. And If I appear to be special in this endeavor, well, chalk that up to the account itself [puffs]. Not me [three short puffs, lays down pipe].

[Gene takes a bathroom break; I review over what I've typed thus far. Gene returns and we continue.]

During brief intermissions of this awakening-pain [reaches for canister], the flashbacks that accompanied it [removes a special blend of tobacco], and the fearful imagination of impending what-ifs [Opens bag, sniffs tobacco], I gradually regained my consciousness ...

Though [reloads pipe] ... because I was coming in ... and out ... of consciousness for a rather long time [strikes match]—perhaps days, even weeks [match breaks and quickly extinguishes]—I found myself to be quite disorientated long after I awoke [throws match in ashtray].

Even within the construct of my perverse state of consciousness, I say, “awoke,” because I was certainly awake [strikes another match]—regardless of the incapacitation of

my faculties [match fails again]. That is [strikes another match], after I regained my consciousness [match ignites brilliantly], and all throughout this account thereafter, I was not sleeping, nor was I in a coma, as some may speculate ... or as I may even have wished [inhales, tobacco crackles like kenneling wood, and smells far better than the first].

Plainly said [stokes pipe], I'm not recounting a mere delusion, hallucination, or an elaborate phantasmagoria that was a figment of my imagination [puffs], but actual, matter-of-factly, events I experienced [long exhale accompanied with smoke rings].

[Perhaps I should get my boss a hookah for Christmas, because I swear I'm looking at the caterpillar from *Alice in Wonderland*.]

And the truth be told [grabs decanter of rum], even now, as I'm recollecting this lucid memory, it's difficult—[pours glass]—for me to express how I felt *while* it happened. That is [puffs], since I'm writing this *after* the fact, I admit I'm sending mixed messages, feelings and emotions to my readers [takes sips]—which was something I thought I had worked out before I began writing to you; but here I am [puffs], telling you I haven't.

Me-then and *Me-now* [takes long sip] ... would indeed tell two different stories; but because *Me-then* didn't have the capacity to write with pen and paper [puffs]—let alone by any means—*Me-now* is trying to recollect those memories imprinted upon *our* minds—and by "our," I mean *Me-then*, *Me-now*, and *Me-between-then-and-now* [takes sip while exhaling].

When I became aware of myself, and my disposition to a certain degree (at least as far as one could in the state I was in), I believed myself to have been in a [takes sip] ... room of some sorts ... to be held captive by some capacity ... some entity ... against my will ... because I *didn't* want to be there. I sure as

hell didn't *ask* to be there—a confusing, inconceivable and frightfully horrific state of abstraction.

And to no comfort of my own, this room ... this torture chamber ... was pitch-black, dreadfully darkened beyond any darkness I've ever experienced [puffs], or so I thought ...

[Sips rum, chews on fingernails, stares blankly at an eighteenth-century reproduction of Dante's *Inferno* (which is open to a horrendous depiction of the depths of hell), encased in glass, mounted on the wall above a towering bookshelf].

As I second-guessed myself, a horrible fear clung tightly to me, and before I could interpret it, the fear confirmed to me, through an immense shivering sensation, like none I've ever felt before (even felt in nightmares moments before waking), that is ... this was no out-of-body experience. It was the actually of my present reality.

And to my panic-stricken heart (or whatever organ I felt death-clinching my soul at the time), beyond any reasoning, it seemed as if the darkness was becoming exponentially darker ... like closing your eyes, then squeezing your eyelids tight and tighter and tighter; and after they've been squeezed as tight as they possibly could be squeezed, you'd have to squeeze them even tighter ... to the point of mental exhaustion and anguish. And then, and only then, you'd have to make it darker, and further burden yourself into madness, by placing your hands over your eyes ... one at a time, hand-over-hand. And then, through sorcery or a dark imagination, you'd have to place another hand, and another one after that ... hands over hands over hands ... until your eyes revoked the *thought* of light's existence ... or before it existed, like the darkness that preceded the big bang, or as Genesis describes, "... immense darkness hovering over the face of the deep ..."

In a similar fashion of how I explained this darkness [puffs], it felt as if my eyes were being forcefully held shut—

but not by my own hands. And no matter how hard I tried to open them, or remove my hands (just in case they were there and I wasn't feeling them), I couldn't ...

[Smoking, drinking, staring and thinking continues]

Which, in a strange, reverse kind-of-way, made me recall a childhood memory in which I *didn't* want to open my eyes at all, because my parents, through tough love, had forced me to sleep in the dark, without a nightlight, and I didn't want to see any monsters.

[Here, I stopped dictating momentarily. While typing, my secretary had somehow entangled a golden-lock of her hair between a few of the rapidly pounding type-hammers: that were, like orchestrated rhythmic percussions, stamping impressions of letters via an ink-ribbon onto a plain, white sheet of paper.

In fact, the letters might as well have been notes, because the striking-sound of the type-hammers was sweet music to my ears. And since I was dictating to her, I felt like the conductor of this orchestrated musical. And yet, not to be cruel or sadistic ... hell knows what I've been through ... even Isabella's whimpering, as the type-hammers grasped her hair (like one would do with their hands to his or her partner during passionate lovemaking), brought music to my ears ... a precious melody. And I suppose even a high-pitched screech would have been entertaining and precious to me after the unspeakable things I've experienced.

At first, she tried to play it off, like nothing had happened; but I quickly realized she needed my assistance. So I laid my pipe down, stood up and walked around the desk ...

Mercy, I thought, almost losing my balance, as a pleasant-smelling fragrance infiltrated my olfactory and disarmed my professional manner of discretion. It wasn't an

overpowering-perfume smell, either; but a citrusy-sweet and butter-cream concoction of moisturizing body lotion. I know this because I asked her, not to mention her knees and a lower thigh (exposed from the split-seam of her pencil skirt) were shimmering with an amber glow.

And yes, all this was transcribed with a typewriter—to be exact, a 1922 Portable Corona Typewriter ©.

Call me old-fashioned if you'd like, but in addition to the sound I've described, typing on hand-feed, loose-leaf paper captures raw translations of the minds' declarations; specifically, it ensures the first-draft to be genuinely pure, leaving all stokes of ingenuity and mistakes (be it misstrikes, spelling or grammatical errors) in an unaltered state ... like the planets, stars and distant galaxies.]

After an insufferable amount of time in this awkward state of consciousness, as some of my pain subsided, I was able to abstractly digest my helpless disposition; and even though I still couldn't see and was in pure agony just because of that, I also, slowly-but-surely, through senses unfamiliar to me, became aware of my bizarre surroundings.

My first assumption was that something dreadfully awful had happened to me, and I was merely confined to a bed in an isolated ward of a hospital. And because I thought this, I attempted to call for help several times; however, when I tried to speak, my lips would not open, nor could I even feel my tongue. It was as if my lips—like my eyes—were being forcefully held shut.

Experiencing this type of sensory deprivation frightened me more than I can explain. Not only was my ability to see and speak impaired, but also my ability to hear or smell. Try to imagine that. Perhaps only someone like Helen Keller could. And I don't mean this in a joking manner. Being deprived of these senses is not joke. I was experiencing first-

hand what a brave little girl Helen was. Imagine being deprived of even one sense. At this juncture of my awareness, having been deprived of four senses scared me shitless.

Oh, I could feel. But let me put this into perspective. Imagine watching a horror movie, and in a darkened room of a cabin in the middle of nowhere, you see a girl completely bound and gagged—arms and legs tied with rope, nose and ears plugged with rubber corks, a gag in her mouth, and duck-tape wrapped around her eyes. Now cut to this scene: Just outside that room you see a psychotic killer approaching the door with an axe. How does that make you feel? How do you think the girl feels? How about me? Oh, and because the girl can feel, you see this too: before the psychotic killer goes to sharpen his axe, he places a couple of rats in the room with the girl. Now how does that make you feel?

Anyway, like I said, at this juncture I was scared shitless. If I could've picked what sensory I could've had, it would've been my eyes, so at least I could see my doom approaching. Which, I suppose, is why most of our parents told us to walk on the side of the street towards oncoming traffic.

[I asked Gene to pause. I used the bathroom, then returned, but not before pouring myself another brandy and cream.]