**Falling**

“It feels like I'm falling.” I said with a vague wave of my hands.

I turned in the chair to get a better look at his response, but Dr. Howitz merely nodded, brought his fingers into a steeple, and returned my look.

His piercing, intellegent eyes, yet gentlemanly look were a forceful combination. I was now aware surely of why the others in the club had recommended this doctor for matters of the mind.

“Falling you say… Are there any other sensations that come with this falling? Any other sights or emotions?” he asked, writing something quickly down on his notebook.

My eyes drifted quickly over the tasteful dark wood room. Rows of green and red bound books lined the walls, all of some science or another. It seemed that Dr. Howitz was very well read.

“I would say, and decidedly so, that the sensation is quite terrifying. It certainly is not one which I wish to continue.” I stated, trying not to think about the dark blackness which, during the night, I so often found myself.

“Mr. Lombard, it would be instrumental to describe the sensation, if at all possible, in as much detail as you can.” He paused to adjust his glasses.

“The purpose of this activity is to discern the psychic underpinnings for your current visages. The science of the matter says thusly, that if upon recollection and study of one's experiences during the dream, and through analysis of a scientist such as myself, it will elucidate the subconscious trigger for such experiences in the first place.”

“Consider the following situation. If for instance, and begging your pardon, for I know this to not be the case, quite opposite in fact, it were true that your current state of employ was being threatened by forces out of your control, the falling might represent your mind coming to terms with this fact, projecting the falling sensation as an allegory for the helplessness of the situation.”

I nodded, not completely at ease with the current line of questioning, yet deciding to trust the tastes of the fellows at the club, I assumed that Dr. Howitz indeed was describing a new technique unknown to me in the field of the psychic science.

“I believe I understand.” I said, trying to sound more sure than I felt.

“Yet is it not peculiar to have such visions if one considers my current state of affairs? Much the opposite from your example, business is going splendidly, my health is in good condition, and I am currently looking very much forward to the wedding of my sister.”

Dr. Howitz's eyes twitched at the mention.

“Your sister you say?”

“Indeed.” I said smiling, “Why she marries the under secretary of finance in not two months time.” She had done very well for herself.

“Hmm. Well, how is your relationship with your sister?”

“Quite good I might think. I always looked after her when we were younger, and made sure she never went wanting. The under secretary is the consummate gentleman. I should not have to worry at all I believe. She is safe in his hands.”

“I see.” Dr. Howitz said, somewhat distracted by his own thoughts.

“Doctor Howitz, I must say, I don't understand your techniques, but perhaps it will help to recount the experience, ghastly though it might be.”

I struggled to remember the sensation, having willfully locked it so far away in the recesses of my mind.

I was falling.

Darkness was all around me.

I knew instinctively that there was no air, yet I could feel the falling non the less.

I was wearing no clothes, yet did not feel embarrassed nor cold.

Yet I was falling.

Was there an end? Would, after some interminable time, I come to a sudden and horrific stop with some terrestrial firmament, or would I tumble forever in this non-space amid the blackness?

I knew not, and that perhaps was the worst of it. The anxiety of never know the end, yet know that one must exist.

But there was nothing but the darkness. And I fell.

I walked into Dr. Howitz's office for the second time and thanked the servant as he took my jacket. Despite the lack of any real effect of the previous week's effort, I felt like I had gained some measure of the doctor, and found his style and composure to my liking. I had said to that effect to the chap who had suggested him at the club. I would have to return the favor the next chance I got.

“Good evening Mr. Lombard!” Dr Howitz put down a saucer of tea, and realizing the confrontation was to his advantage, offered me some as well, which I politely declined. I was here for business, yet the attention to detail was encouraging.

“Ah, straight to business then? Why don't you take a seat.”

He pulled up another chair close, but not too close to my own.

“Mr. Lombard, I will say that your case is, compared to others I have taken, not so serious as to cause alarm. I will say however, that the reoccurring nature of the dream, and the lack of variation is quite interesting. Has the dream continued to plague you?”

I nodded, realizing that I felt somewhat worse than yesterweek's visit. It seemed that despite the plentiful sleep, I was not as refreshed as usual, not doubt due to the horrid dream. I related as much to the good doctor.

“Yes. I have seen this before. As there is still no change to the dream?”

I shook my head.

“And it still occurs every night?”

“Without error, and to my grave misfortune.” I replied.

“Yes, well, we will see...”

The doctor then asked me a battery of questions. This time, they felt much more structured, as if he were attempting to tease some cause and effect from my own life to the dream once more.

After exhausting these, he turned to more qualitative inquiries about the dream, focusing on my feelings, thoughts and emotions.

He wrote many notes as he continued.

Finally, after perhaps a good hour, he held out a hand.

“Thank you my good sir, I believe I have gathered as much information as a good scientist could hope. I will attempt to ascertain the true cause of your dreams in the week between our meetings.”

I must have looked downcast at the lack of substantial progress, since the doctor then tapped his pen on the table.

“However...” He looked up at a shelf opposite to the books. It held a variety of darkened glass phials behind a glass paneled enclosure of dark wood. Each one of them was labeled meticulously.

The doctor held up a finger.

“If a surgeon must perform an operation, this would address the cause of the ailment of the body. However, like the surgeon would administer anesthetic, we must also address the short term discomfort.”

He strode over to the cabinet and selected with great care, a dark green bottle and measured out an amount right there before my eyes. He did not use any device to aid his pouring, yet when he finished he stoppered the smaller vessel and wrote a label on it.

“This is Draught of Zepher, a potion designed to aid in the obtainment of calm sleep. I have here enough dosage for several weeks, as its effects are quite strong. I have written exact instructions on the bottle here as well, but right now suffice to say that it must be diluted with water, and only water. Take care not to mix it with alcohol of any kind.”

He offered me the vial.

“Hopefully this will give you the sleep you desire while I determine the true cause of your dreams.”

Armed with something physical, I felt much reassured, and thanked Dr. Howitz greatly as I left his office.

But the potion did not work.

The effects seemed to begin, I felt like I was floating on a cloud as I drifted to sleep, presumably the reason for the name of the draught, yet what felt like half an hour later, I suddenly became aware of the dream state which had so tormented me.

I felt the clouds slowly part beneath me, and I looked down with horror. Below me was the darkness from which it seems I could not escape.

I feverishly clawed at the clouds which had been so peaceful and helpful, yet they now cruelly broke apart, evaporating into nothingness. I started falling once more.

And this time I could sense an end. Nothing so comforting as to be able to see this end; it remained as allusive as ever, yet as with most dreams, its existence was something I inherently knew to be truth.

There was an end to the falling.

Did that make it better or worse? Had my position changed at all? It had. For before I was in fear for wondering of a possible end, and now I was in fear of *when* the end would occur.

The inescability of this end, and the brutal wrenching crush which would accompany it as my body slammed into whatever dream ground lay beneath me was a horror which would not leave me. Every second was spent, must have been spent, for there was nothing else of which to preoccupy my mind, being so ensconced in the void in which I fell, turning my mind over the inevitable end.

I did not sleep well.

“Oh...” Dr. Howtitz said, his calm demeanor breaking somewhat as I walked into his office.

“There is no reason to be polite. I know of my appearance. The managers at the plant all saw the need to take me aside and ask of my disposition. I didn't know what to tell them. I can't sleep. Or at least not without that damnable dream!” I resisted the urge to drive my hand onto the desk near me. It would have been improper.

Dr. Howitz nodded.

“Do not think for a moment that my thought have strayed from your condition. I have no other clients at this point and have devoted all of this past week turning over your case in my mind. Additionally, due to the strange reoccurance of your visions, I have enlisted the help of the City Mentalist Association, the highest regarded group concerning the science of the mind.”

“Any suggestions then?” I asked bluntly. The time for courteous behavior was fading. This dream was swiftly becoming a problem, affecting my work and my sister's upcoming wedding.

“In fact I do believe I have two courses of action. I have exhausted my typical subtle means of work, and it seems that even the realms of chemistry are held at bay by whatever mental affliction has caused your visions. Therefore, I have brought a colleague. Mr. Lombard, please meet Dr. Alfred Clarendon, my colleague.”

I was surprised to see a man appear in a gray brown suit from the corner of the room. He wore a grim expression and had a gaunt demeanor. He must have been present in the room the whole time, but my eyes had missed him for some reason.

“P-Pleased to make your acquaintance Dr. Clarendon.” I said, trying to hide my surprise.

“I apologize if I have startled you. I was simply looking over the fantastic collection of tomes Dr. Howitz had collected.” He said, reaching out his hand.

I shook it. It was similarly gaunt, yet also very large. My hand collapsed into his easily.

His gaze was very fierce, possessing an inner fire which spoke to some powerful inner motivation which burned yet within him. He was a man with purpose. He did not seem a gentle man, but a serious and effective one.

“Dr. Clarendon's specialty is exploring the recesses of the mind. All of the members of the Association have some skill in this art, but where mine also extends to chemistry and biology, Dr. Clarendon has perfected the art of delving the secrets of the brain in even more detail.”

Dr. Clarendon nodded seriously.

“Our decision as to your case is that its seriousness necessitates advanced techniques of the mentalist profession.”

Dr. Clarendon nodded again.

“Oh… I suppose you're correct. At this point I would very much like to be free of these visions.”

“Verily.” Dr. Howitz said, gesturing towards the other doctor. “My friend, will you explain to the good Mr. Lombard our strategy?”

“Certainly.” Dr. Clarendon said in a gravely voice. “Mr. Lombard, have you ever heard of hypnotism?”

I was taken aback. “Perhaps once or twice.” I lied.

“Hypnotism is a skill recently reclaimed from the mystic arts and turn into an art of the scientist. Under the skilled and watchful aegis of the hypnotist, in this case, myself, you will fall into an artificial sleep like state. Because this state is induced, it might be that the visions you have will be absent. However, even if they are present, the hypnotic state will allow us to ask you questions as they occur.”

“Ah. I see...” I muttered, concerned with the undesirable consequence of perhaps falling once again. It was bad enough dealing with it during the night…

“If you are ready Mr. Lombard, we shall start the procedure shortly?” Dr. Clarendon suggested.

He edged forward while saying so, and a gleam appeared in his eye.

I knew that kind of spark. It all made sense to me now. Dr. Howitz was a gentleman of the highest degree. Dr. Clarendon was more of an impassive scientist. I now understood the fire his eyes held. To him I was an *interesting case.* It was his skills against my affliction. Man versus nature.

Despite my reactive discomfort at this realization, I also came to the conclusion that this was the perfect type of man to handle my current problems. He would not cease until whatever was ailing me was defeated, or at least categorized.

“Alright.” I said, shifting in my chair. “What would you like me to do?”

“Perfect. Merely position yourself onto this sofa here, and if you don't mind, lean backward a bit. The technique is more successful if the subject is comfortable.” he smiled, but his smile was still a bit too eager for my own tastes. Dr Howitz looked on from behind, presumably ready to step in if Dr. Clarendon took things too far.

Clarendon then explained the procedure, how it worked and what to expect.

“Perfection. Now if you'll simply turn your attention to this chain.” The metal chain swung pendulum-like before my eyes. I found it blurring before my vision and felt myself slipping once again into sleep.

The void was there once more and I was falling forward into it.

The not-air rushed by, my limbs flung akimbo from the downward force of my descent.

With great reluctance and effort, I turned my head towards the direction opposite to my fall.

Above me, far far above me, as if a speak, was the portal through which I had passaged to get to my current state. The two doctors were close to me, observing my state.

Then my strength gave out, and I had to turn my head downwards again.

The familiar fear blossomed in me once again. The unsourceable knowledge that an end was close blossomed like some horrid twisted weed within my heart.

Yet in this current state, I seemed to have some better control of my current state. This was, after all, not a dream of natural beginnings after all. I *was* awake. I was thinking clearly, or at least, as far as I could tell. I could recite all the knowledge of my profession should I wish. I was not asleep, yet I was dreaming.

With this newly acquired realization, I quieted my fear and stared downward, trying to discern a structure to the structureless blackness in which in I was flung.

I became convinced that it was vast. I knew it intrinsically. It was larger than the city in which I lived, possibly larger than the whole province.

My thought were suddenly taken to a journey to the continent I had endured when in my younger years. At one point on that voyage, I had been allowed to the top of the ship and had, from that vantage point, been able to look out upon our current position.

I remembered the fear that had suddenly reared in my young mind as I realized that, in every direction I turned, there was nothing but featureless fathomless expanse of water.

The void, I was realizing was quite like that, yet much more profound. The ocean has scared me so as a child because I had not the experience. I did not know by the maps how far the distances were, and in that second, could have been convinced that the ocean was all that there was. Here, in the void, I was in a similar ocean, a similar unbelievably vast expanse. Yet this expanse was not of this world at all. The ocean after all, could only be as large as it widest point and was thankfully constrained on all its sides by the rigid continents of lands. The void had no such restrictions!

A mile? A hundred miles?

I peered further and further, my mind racing.

A thousand miles?

It could be arbitrarily large, larger than even I could comprehend!

Infinite?

The thought chilled me. The juxtaposition of the thought that this void might in fact be limitless, and the assuredness that there was some end to it clashed violently within myself. Those two facts were impossible, yet I was positive of both of them, to my very core.

How could such things be?

From above, I could vaguelly hear Dr. Clarendon attempting to ask me questions. As much as I would have liked to respond, I could not.

It was just me and the void, falling forever.

And then, in the darkness, shapes appeared.

I was surprised first. Then I was terrified. What things could exist in this blackness?

I could feel my heart beating fast in my chest and sweat ran down my head disappearing into the nothingness. I turned towards the closest shape, sure to see some sort of monstrosity, some thing born only from the idle thoughts of a child's nightmares. Yet instead I saw a person.

It was a man, like me. He tumbled silently in the void. He was not awake.

I attempted to get closer to him, to edge my body towards this other person who somehow shared my fate.

But the void held no air. There was no force to bring myself in one direction or another, and although I seemed to be able to twist my body with some effort, I was not able to change my trajectory at all. Unsatisfied, I tried to understand who this person was.

He was younger than I, with black hair. His eyes were closed, and his limbs were uncontrolled. He tumbled endlessly next to me like a doll. I stared at him without understanding.

Then I noticed a person beside him.

This person was female. She too tumbled silently, her red hair fluttering wildly in its fall, then collecting against her body as it rotated, then free once more.

“Hello!” I shouted to both of them.

Neither of them responded.

“Can you hear me?” I tried again.

There was no sound of recognition.

I felt a crushing defeat at this, that even through there were others which were similarly beholden to my fate, that I would not be able to communicate with them. It seemed unjust. It seemed inconceivably cruel.

Then, as if my eyes were acclimating to the darkness of the void, I became aware of more people. All of them far out of reach, some above me, some below me, all falling unconsciously.

My willpower fluttered as I stared around me at the multitudes, realizing the extent of my shared horror. Were so many trapped as I was?

Hundreds of bodies tumbling, thousands upon thousands, as far as I could see, a mass of people. I screamed. Anything to break the nightmare. My mouth opened slowly but no sound escaped from it. I continued screaming silently, anything to wake up, anything to free myself from the tumbling multitudes.

I awoke screaming.

Dr. Howitz and Dr. Clarendon were beside me along with some unnamed servant. They had evidently been trying to wake me for some while.

I looked around them, too astonished to feel embarrassment.

In a moment of pure fear, I gripped, perhaps too forcefully, unto Dr. Clarendon's arm.

“There are others there!” I cried. Then, realizing my situation, loosened my grip on the doctor and apologized, trying to rise.

The doctor withdrew and spoke at length to Dr. Howitz in German.

They came to some sort of consensus.

Dr. Howitz left for a moment while I collected my dignity. Dr. Clarendon looked my over and took some notes.

Dr. Howitz returned with a set of glasses, and what looked like a very expensive liquor.

He poured all of us a glass and motioned for all of us to sit.

“Mr. Lombard. We have not been completely truthful with you regarding your malady.” he said, his brow furrowed.

Still somewhat out of sorts, I sipped at the alcohol and raised an eyebrow.

“We have been aware of this condition in general for nigh about two months.” Dr. Howitz admitted.

“You are not the only unfortunate person to be afflicted with these dreams of falling, although you are the only one I've met who can describe the experience in such clarity. Others simply describe a sensation.”

“To further clarify things, we are facing an unprecedented occurrence. This seems to be a contagious mental disease.” Dr. Clarendon.

“What?” I put my glass on the table next to me and leaned forward.

“How is such a thing possible? What possible method of transmission could there be that could freely move this… disease between individuals. We are talking about a mental affliction!”

“You are not alone in your frustration. The rest of the Association and I have been working tirelessly to try to understand and mitigate this epidemic. Unfortunately, there are few of us, and the administration does not seem to take our concerns seriously.”

“There is also the problem of knowledge. We have never encountered anything like this before. We have no way to know how it spreads, who is vulnerable, the effects… Mr. Lombard, I don't mean to frighten you, but truthfully, we know nothing.” Dr. Howitz admitted, his head bowed.

My mouth suddenly felt very dry.

“No one has any idea?” I murmured, head spinning.

“There are theories. There are attempts. But none that I know that have been very successful. The disease's resistance to our techniques is very troubling as you yourself have discovered. We are at the vanguard of discovery.” Dr. Clarendon broke in, still a bit too eager.

“What is the current state of this epidemic? How come I have not heard of it?” I demanded.

Dr. Clarendon acquiesced to Dr. Howtitz.

The German ran a hand over his forehead.

“We are in correspondence with our compatriots on the continent and even the far reaches of the orient. The telegrams are clear. It seems to be a world wide occurrence.”

I collapsed into my seat. What was there to do? Did such a disease have a cure? *Could* such a disease have a cure? It was an affliction of the mind after all, not a malady of the flesh.

“Then what is there to do?” I asked, numbly. My world was collapsing around me.

This time, Dr. Clarendon could not be restrained. He knelt before me.

“There is a more experimental technique, which is yet untried in the face of this disease.”

Dr. Howitz looked somewhat annoyed.

But at this point I was ready to try anything.

“What is this technique doctor?”

“It is referred to as lucid dreaming. It is a state that occurs when the dreamer is aware that they are in a dream.”

“How is that any different than the hypnosis that we just tried?” I asked, disappointed.

“There is a very crucial difference. In hypnosis, normally there is the ability for the subject to communicate with the outer world. It is an outward facing technique. However, this disease seems to be immune to the implements of this world. Lucid dreaming is an inward facing technique. When one dreams in a lucid state, they are able to *control* their dream, bend it to their will!”

I quickly understood why Dr. Clarendon would espouse such a technique.

But I was quiet for a moment. I feared that my will was not strong enough to affect such a horror as the visions I had been having.

“Do you truly believe such a thing to be possible?” A queer feeling overcame me. “Since these experiences, now that I think about them, don't seem to be… mine per se. This last time when I was falling, I saw other people. Could they be the others afflicted by this disease? If so, is this dream truly mine?”

Dr. Clarendon looked at me with some surprise. “You were able to see others? Do you remember features? It should be quite impossible for you to dream of a person you have never met, but if you were to see someone, for instance, from the Asiatic continent… the implications of such a possibility would be quite profound.” he scratched his beard.

He thought for a moment, before reaching a conclusion.

“In the realm of science, it is not always possible to constrain the experiments performed. Not always is it possible to have the measurements just such, to count and control and ponder. However, the heart of science is predicating a theory and attempting to realize an experiment such that observations from this experiment either validate or falsify that theory. Thus, in fact, there is no difference here. We simply try the technique and observe the effects.”

Dr. Howitz stepped forward. “Dr. Clarendon, I respect your drive, but possibly, are we venturing too much into the realm of the unknown? These techniques are experimental. The mind is not forgiving of mistakes, as you know. The mind is not a playground, not even for us.” The last bit seemed especially pointed.

But Dr. Clarendon would not be dissuaded that easily. He disregarded Dr. Howitz and instead approached me.

“It is true that we are, in some sense in a mode of discovery, rather than premeditated and assured consequences. It is also true that by following this course of action we are putting an unknown independent variable against an unknown model; this lucid dreaming again this disease. However, it is true that it has not been tried, it it could very well be that it is this lucid dream that will prove to be the cure.”

“Mr. Lombard, are you comfortable being the subject of this experiment?”

It took me all of a second to respond. I had had the answer collecting in my head as he had spoken.

“No. I am not comfortable. However, this technique and the experiment you have described does seem to be the best course of action at this moment. If all other venues have been tried here and elsewhere and have not proven affective, it only makes sense that we must venture into the space of the unknown.”

“More importantly, this disease is affecting me greatly. Any action which would possibly lessen its grip on my mind would be very much encouraged. I am willing to try this.”

Dr. Clarendon beamed. He turned to Dr. Howitz. “I believe you have something to help Mr. Lombard?”

Dr. Howitz sighed and went to fetch something from his cabinet.

As he did so, Dr. Clarendon described the sensation of lucid dreaming, the effects, and the methods with which the state could be achieved. It seems that normally it was quite difficult to obtain the state, but that in recent years, science, speared headed by Dr. Clarendon and another chemist had determined an elixer that had the effect of producing the state without the training.

I thanked both of them profusely and after some more reassurances to Dr. Howitz that I would visit or call for him if anything went wrong, I departed the office. As I left, I felt like I missed a weighty conversation between the two doctors.

Dr. Howitz was in his office when I abruptly entered unannounced.

My face was disheveled, my hair greasy, my clothes wrinkled and unkempt. I presumably smelled quite badly.

“My good sir! You are in poor state!” He cried out at seeing my appearance and leapt to his feet. “I will call for a servant. You can bathe here. I have a fresh shirt for you.”

But I held him back with a hand.

“Dr. Howitz” I croaked, my throat cracked and tortured from screaming.

“The experiment was a success. Perhaps… too successful, haha!” I chuckled in spite of myself.

“After all, does the sheep desire to know it is being lead to the slaughter? Would the knowing help it in any way? Or perhaps would it be the kindest mercy to let the animal labor under the delusions of its normal occurrence. It matters not, for the deed has been done.”

“What are you talking about? My friend, have you slept at all? It has been three days...”

“Haha! Sleep. We shall talk of sleep. I have slept truly if it were to be said. I have closed my eyelids and swung downward; I have laid horizontal, deadlike, my body stretched far on my own bed. And I have even drifted off into that world of the unconscious. But no. I have not slept. I have fallen.” I said, suppressing a grin.

“I am not even truly here!” I said, teetering on my feet. “Even now I can see that void; the people in it falling with me. Some of them, like me are now aware of where they are, yet most scream in terror as I once did. For days I screamed. Years. Time is putty in the hands of the unconsciousness.”

Dr Howitz looked quite alarmed. “The experiment was too dangerous! My own horror, Mr. Lombard we have hurt you!” he rushed forward, but I bodily pushed him down to his own chair with the strength of desperation.

His eyes went wide. I towered above him.

“Dr. Howitz. It is with great pain and effort that I stand before you, and I only do so with the useless, impossible hope that you and the rest can avert my fate. I wish to save you my friend! Please, listen to me!”

He listened. I grabbed his notebook and handed it to him forcibly.

“Hear the truths of the now mad man!” I commanded.

He nodded gravely, and silently.

“There we are. We are all falling there. Always. All of us in that void. The end is always felt. It is coming. Soon. I can feel it coming, as sure as I know that it is day, even though I still sleep, or my own name. Perhaps you have weeks. Perhaps you have months. Perhaps you might even have years, but I am unsure whether that would be a blessing or a curse. I believe in the swift death over the long decay.”

“These things you must know. This void of which I see, even now in my waking eyes, the tumbling bodies calling out… We are *all* there. Every one of us. Every man, woman, and child, every king and president, every factory worker, farmer and thief. Everyone is falling with me.”

“And I have seen the end. It is a horrible indescribable thing, sitting there immobile, unreachable in the infinity of the void, yet we will all fall to It, and soon. The impossible will consume us all, that hated red light, the fire and the brimstone and churning blackened depths: the innumerable masses cry out as they hit the mass one by one, having stepped over the boundary between the possible and the impossible. It is no longer falling. It is squirming, yelling, screaming, thrashing. It is the stench and heat of innumerable masses all clambering towards the void, to only be falling once again.”

“And deep beneath it all, is It. The thing which is beneath us. The thing which the infinite bodies thrash against. Anything to be one inch further from It. Even if that means pushing another lower into the heaving mass. Even if it means pushing, climbing, gouging, ripping one another. It is a frenzied madness. It is insanity made real and corporeal.”

I took a rasping breath, and hurriedly grabbed at the alcohol still on the table near me. I downed the whole thing before the doctor's wide eyes.

“I hope you the best of luck. I hope you and Dr. Clarendon figure a way to save us from this madness.”

I shivered, as my mind fluttered between the two worlds.

“Mr. Lombard. Are you convinced that you are dreaming currently?” Dr. Howitz asked, clearly not believing anything I had said.

I tore the notebook from his hands and made sure he had written down my rantings. He had.

I sighed and handed it back to him.

My vision threatened to fade to that other place, and only through force of will could I say my last words.

“My good doctor. Soon doctor I will dream no longer. I have been convinced of this. This world in which we live? It is nothing but a sweet sweet illusion, brought about by nothing but the kindest of forces of good. Or perhaps it is a collective dream of our own, unable and unwilling to come to terms with the possibility of falling forever towards It.”

“Don't you see? I am not dreaming. I am *waking up*. We all are. God save us all!”

Blackness clouded my vision.

I woke up falling.