**10 AM**

It’s 10 AM. Wednesday, July 3rd, 2013. I want to be at the gym, cranking out chin-ups. Or at home, typing out my story. But instead, I’m here. Looking at a spreadsheet I don’t understand, words that mean nothing to me, numbers that are vitally important to somebody, but pass through my eyes unhindered, like wind blowing through the branches of a tree.

I’m trying to make my cursor align with the blinking indicator. On the third try, I get it, enjoying the first sense of accomplishment I’ve felt since the day began. I hear the mention of my name in the other room. It’s called HR, but really, it’s just a dreary and tired woman who talks on the phone a lot. Is this how the grown-ups live? With titles and numbers to make them feel important, and safe, and validated? Some twisted justification for the existence of human life, a false sense of security in a world that is hopelessly out of our control?

I think I’ve got it figured out – where to find my bliss, the pure, unadulterated joy that makes every moment worth savoring. It isn’t found in the cubicle, on the white and black cells of microsoft excel. It isn’t even found in the lab, in stainless beakers and colorless fluids that turn brilliant shades of red and yellow. It’s found here, in the words that course through my veins, from the keyboard, and onto the computer screen. It’s more than mere enjoyment or delight in the act. I think it’s an actual physiological response, an adrenaline rush, but with chemicals many times more wondrous and invigorating. Never have I been so sure. This is what I want to do for the rest of my life.

Am I hasty and idealistic, to come to such a conclusion so soon? After all, it has only been my second day of “work”, if “work” is defined by my sitting in front of the office computer. Am I naïve and ignorant, to think that I can make a living purely through writing? Or does the fact that the thought *I’d rather starve trying* trickles into my mind make me crazy and foolish? And does my ultimate rationale, the subconscious justification upon which my conviction lies, that I believe I am good, very good, good enough to produce a bestseller, make me conceited and arrogant?

I have not a clue. But I do know this: the answer to each and every one of these questions is one and the same. I am either unquestionably right or horribly wrong. I will fly to the moon or burn by my own fuel. Isn’t that how all legends are made? The entrepreneurs, the scientists. Their names ring through my head. They risked everything and more, and through sheer genius or a hand from providence, emerged as some of the most brilliant specimens of mankind. Is this a foretelling of my own greatness?

But a nasty little voice whispers into my ear.

*What you don’t hear about, Matt, what isn’t sentimental and good publishing business, is just how many people have tried that and failed. Given up everything and lost even more. Plunged for the rocks and missed the little crevice of sea.*

*You might be good. You might be talented or lucky enough to make it in the field. But you’ll never know until it’s too late and you’ll live with nagging uncertainty until then, relief or despair after. These interns sharing the office with you - they’ve got it figured out. They know how to focus, how to work at a task whether they enjoy it or not. And that will carry them further than your dreams, your delusions, your hopeless hopes ever will.*

The voice is not so much a creeping whisper now as a deafening roar.

*You dawdle and drool and imagine impossible fantasies, all the while ignoring the mounting troubles that lie on your desk. Your laziness, your cowardice, your automatic inclination to distract yourself from reality will be your undoing.*

And it is silent. And it leaves me thinking.

Pondering and calculating a flurry of scenarios and possibilities. Not of the future, but of the past.

What if things had happened differently? What if I hadn’t clicked on *failblog.org* in grade eight, thus beginning a perpetual chain of procrastination that would follow me through high school to this very moment? What if, along the way, I had decided to change? Why don’t I change right now? Is it too firmly embedded in my subconscious? Is it a genetic trait? Why is writing is the only liberating pursuit, the only productive pastime free of, and often indeed, the cause of, my self-destructive tendencies?

On and on the questions come and go, leaving me reeling with convoluted thoughts, my mind racing through an endless spiral of determinism, causality, fate and destiny. And still I have no answers.

People walking by give me looks. This doesn’t look like a financial statement, and as far as they know, interns have no business with documents and reports. My supervisor has printed four papers in the past ten minutes, conveniently walking past my cubicle each time. He thinks I’m doing nothing, that the clatter of my keyboard is just a feint, and a poor one at that – excel spreadsheets demand as much clicking as typing.

Truly, I mean to work. I mean to *work*. To find out why the total average asset is accumulated to calculate the cumulative present value, when the phrase and numerical pattern of the former suggests that the step is redundant.

But time and time again, I find myself back on this document. It’s as if my consciousness floats away once the spreadsheet is opened and reawakens only when faced with the artistic value of words. For I am a word-man. Not by speech, but by lead and ink and LCD lighting that form squiggles and lines, provoke emotion and ecstasy. It is not a safe path, nor a profitable one, but it is the only one to bring warmth to the frost and douse the raging fires of my soul. And I am sure that I have chosen well.