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Salt

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Salt

A faucet. An unremarkable stainless steel faucet, gushing unremarkable tap water. I wash my hands. Wake up. Dry mouth, can't imagine how ghoulish I must look but I have not crossed paths with a human being in a long while. Thirsty. Headed south towards salvation (some may say that salvation has always laid to the south). But I never imagined I would be this far south. It's so cold, but my nerves are petrified, synapses studded with ice shards. And salt. So much salt.

It's a sick joke really, the greatest irony. The oceans were cremated when a mountain the size of the moon screamed across the sky and plunged from heaven, Lucifer himself. We knew it was coming and we were powerless to stop it. While some appealed to divinity and as others prayed for deliverance, I assembled a bunker beneath the backyard sod with my wife and son, and we held each other as the world burned around us. But they're dead now. So much salt, all that remains of the ocean.

Almost. The company I've kept for the past lifetime is dead fish. Legions of them, frozen rotten popsicles stuffed in the freezer. Rotten, most would think, but they are remarkably well-preserved, entombed in ice and ash and salt. I never was much of a fisherman, yet I can say with confidence I have held more fish in my hands than any man who ever walked the Earth. Using a hypodermic syringe, the only tool of my trade I still have a use for (its original use is lost on me at this point) I suck the brine from their scaly corpses and gulp down the fluid. If I could taste, my body would certainly reject it, but the shriveled heap of flesh in my mouth is more of a parasite than an organ.

Headed south. Back on the continent, the final government broadcast told all survivors to make their way south, and fresh water will await. Civilization. Not that any of those bastards expect

anyone to make it. But I am greater than most men. Settling down to sleep, I look out at the waste and dark red fires fueled by sodium chloride sparsely populate the void with glowing eyes. Though I have never encountered these men, they are my stalwart companions. Can only hope they feel the same about me. Who's to say that they're men at all?

Sleep. Different dream, this time a case of bottled water is loaded into a shopping cart. I've considered lobotomy to end these nightmares. Can't though, I laugh.

Fish.

Squish.

Suck.

Slurp.

Crunch.

So much salt.

Been doing this for a thousand years.

So much salt.

Perhaps God is real, and He I.

...

A frigid gust of wind rips across the flats and I think I can taste salt.

Go to sleep.

Wake up. No dreams tonight.

Onward.

{ Joey Szelina