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## Contrasts

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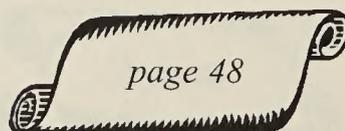
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## Contrasts

There is a cacophony of sounds stomping its way through my skull, eating into my brain. I peer up and down the overpopulated streets teeming with people. Someone steps over the curb and my right shoulder is met by his with a force that is anything but accidental. He pauses, as if he has been done a horrible injustice, looks me up and down and proceeds to ask, "You got something to say, man?" My mind races. I search for the perfect line. Nothing surfaces. I reply with a passive "Eat Shit," tap my friend on the shoulder to get his attention, and we press on, leaving my newfound friend to ponder my words of unspeakable wisdom. Mike steps off the curb and is met by the blare of an enraged car horn and the indignant screams of its owner. We exchange questioning glances and, once again, press on. We come to a place between two hotels and are met with a decision: veer right and continue on our current path, or glide left

toward the water. Mike points haphazardly to the left and grunts something barely audible. We stroll toward the silence.

Underlying the sounds of car horns, people shouting and boisterous music there is a rhythm to be heard. Gravitational forces are at work, sliding this mass of water, which takes twenty-one days to cross, onto and off of this slick, sandy surface known as beach. The rhythm is barely heard as we make our approach, but it encompasses us as we near it, drowning all the nonsense, driving it from our grasp. The rhythm is a patient one. It knows no kindness, it knows no hatred; it simply knows rhythm. Mist erupts from the nothing and leaving salty, moist dew on my hands and my fingers are slick as I bend to lace an untied shoe. Mike has wandered paces ahead of me. He stands basking in the sane, cool Atlantic breeze while I stare at the sand. His face is temporarily illuminated by the soft glow of a match and I'm signaled to join him.



My breath imitates the rhythm as we weave down concrete boardwalk. The icy reflection of a pale slice of moon floats gracefully up, from the silken landscape of liquid ice, through the hot air. Mike spots a vessel mercilessly grinding its way across the shimmering horizon. He sucks some more poison from the filter of his Marlboro and, together, we laugh.

Onward we press, engulfed. A dusky breeze seems to meet us from the north. We exchange knowing looks. Rain. It's charge weighs heavy upon the air. Somewhere, riding a current, perhaps, or pivoting slowly around an anchor, there is a man who could tell you where, and maybe when, but for us it can only mean "RAIN."

Couples lounge gazing on the sand. Somewhere in an alley a bottle is kicked, tinkering to its death against a brick, sending madness through the rhythm to greet us once again. Two gulls eye each other suspiciously over stale picnic remnants. One hobbles, lurching, to the dark shadows of the el-

evated walkway and sits sulkily, stained in oil. A child runs excitedly toward the water and trips when he is beckoned by his mother.

We stride toward the steel railing of the boardwalk and lean restfully against its sturdiness. Spit rolls slowly off my tongue and hangs suspended, momentarily, before being sucked downward where it slaps the wetted sand. Mike lets his cigarette wink at me one last time before he crushes it with his boot and, together, we walk on.

By: Daniel P. Fox



*"Be aware that a halo has to fall only a few inches to be a noose."*

*- Dan McKinnon*

