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finality

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finality

Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"The long descent had ended. The terrifying blackness which had seized and swallowed up the others was gone, and now I was alone. Before me lay nothing, so vast, complete, unchanging, that I cannot possibly describe it. Words are for forms or ideas, yet this was neither. Color, shape, size, dimension, notion, expression- all were lacking, but still it possessed some strange positivism that attracted and drew me into its midst."

Cover Page Footnote

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At what seemed to be the very zenith of emptiness, the flame appeared. One single streak of fire, intensely burning with eerie incandescence, materialized in the void before me. In its shades of brilliance, I saw *myself*, reflected in every deed and every thought—my very *being*, from the first moment of conception to the final fractional instant of life in time.

Although I was but a passive audience witnessing my own human tragedy, so vividly mirrored was each intimate detail that I felt sure I was actively existing once more. Over and over again, the tale underscored the chapters of forsaken opportunity, indelibly etching them upon my memory and casting me into the lowest depths of despair.

The vision faded and the flame began to flicker. Then, suddenly, in one fleeting split-second, I caught glimpse of the rapture that is The Life That Is. Desperately, I grasped for it, striving to gain any fragment, however small, that in some way might check my ever-growing state of desolation.

But it was gone.

The flame lost its brilliance and disappeared, not dying but transferring itself into my very soul, renewing its fire a thousandfold, internally blazing as a fierce holocaust, to be eternally fed by my forlorn thoughts of the greatest loss.

This was forever, and I was alone. Before me lay nothing

FRANKLIN L. KAMP '60