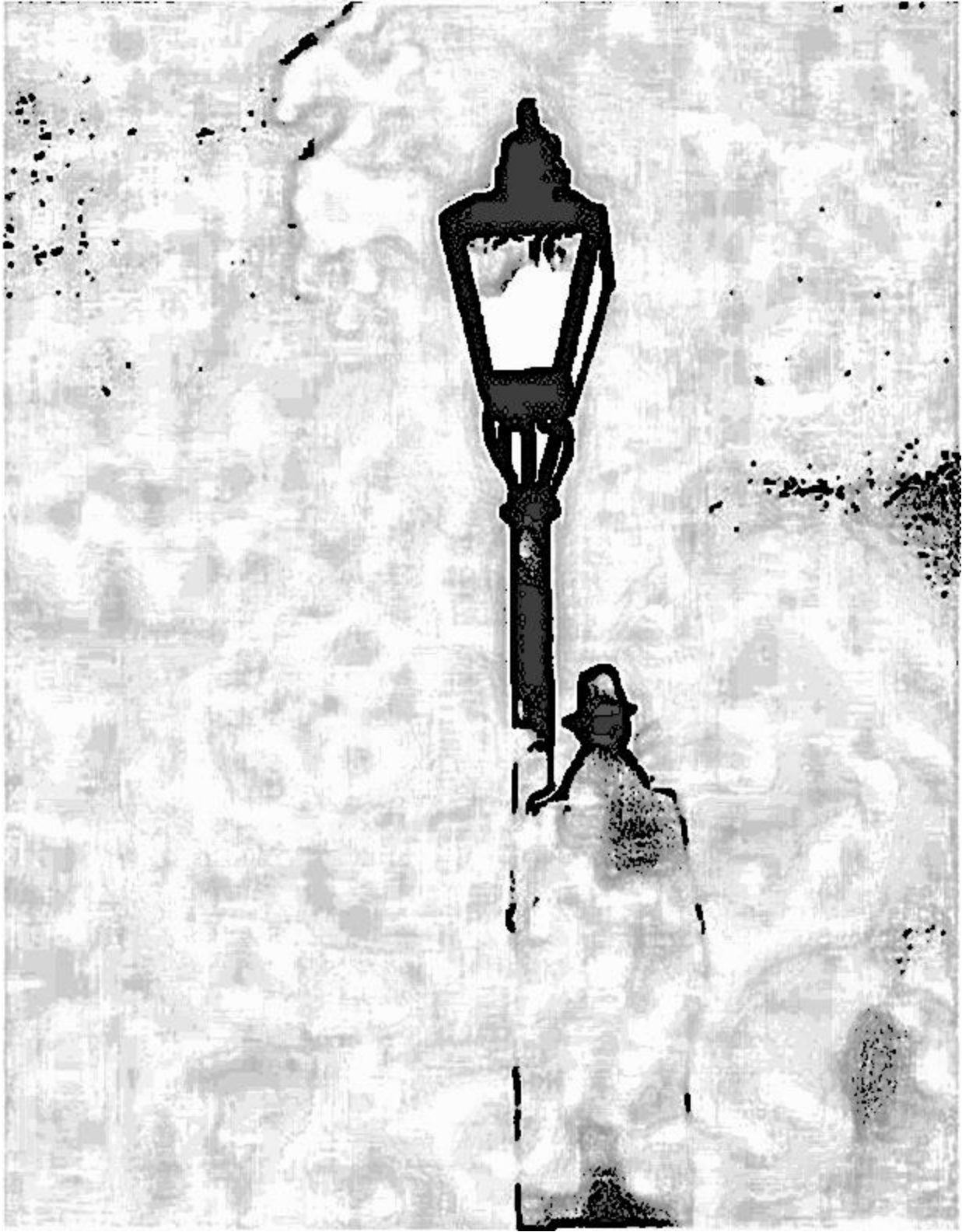


*TAKING IT
ON THE LAM*



EDWARD DROBINSKI



TAKING IT ON THE LAM

By

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The Break

I suspect that if I live through it I'll often think of that strange and dark night. No doubt each time the circumstances will change, just like the scientist's banal present-day rendering of his current version of "scientific fact." But, at the time, like a somnambulist from the pre-war days of Pabst's German expressionism, I was unable to stop and think, though my thoughts were not needed. I knew what I had to do. I knew what was in it, not only for me, but for everyone else involved, and despite being behind the eight ball I just shrugged it off. There was just the show, and in this show the four walls which surrounded me effectively played demons which my world was better off without. It was all manifested abstraction; a pushy, annoying abstraction that followed me everywhere I went. All I felt was the atmosphere pushing me out into the darkness. It was persistent and overwhelming, as if the fog had rolled in with the rain falling on me from an ominous and ghastly low sky when I thought that I could see a glimpse of a ship which was way out to sea on the river tide.



Soren Kierkegaard's "Either/Or" was merely an exercise for avid and intellectually predisposed readers, presumably unaware of their psychological need for the masochism of disappointment, thereby seeking a system to measure the unmeasurable and draw lines in the sand on wind swept days.

At any rate, that's how I think it started. You can take my word or form your own conclusions or ignore the whole damn thing. I don't care about that.



I had wasted a little over twenty-four hours going over the pros and cons. It was high time to act as the doors to the darkness won't be open forever and are just a source of programmed "misfortune" in the light. It was now or never, or some regurgitated facsimile thereof, "courtesy" of some threadbare "scholar" on the public dole. The only competition the evening darkness had was emblematic of the handkerchief, frosted glass, antique, French lighting used by clandestine lovers, which was now emanating from the periodically clouded, quarter moon as seen through the high barred window.

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I changed from my prison garb to my street duds, filling my pockets with the remains of my personal possessions which the bull pigs had not yet "liberated" from the stored items which I carried in. I didn't mind the lack of admissions and orientation rigmarole doping me on my "rights," as much as I minded my missing watch. In fact, I'd have been feeling semi-reet Jake were I in possession of my protective, comforting roscoe pal.



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My private cell was at the end of the line, one painted cinder block wall with a heavy metal door outside my cell separating my holding area from the twenty-four hour Intake room. As I exited my unlocked cell door, I was only seen by the two inmates directly across the way. One said; "Set-up." I said; "I'll wind up brown bread in here anyway." The other said; "Bye."

I wasn't lying. This was my first time in jail for more than the cursory, un-naturally bitter taste forced for 8-9 hours as a juvenile when I found it to be the height of hilarious justice to threaten ding dong sap, Fat "Rev-rend" Al Dingess, the over-aged, school bully, with a BB gun that must have looked quite real to Dingess when pressed against his neck, and made him start begging for forgiveness, which got all of his young victims laughing. I liked the feeling much more than I had expected to and it had some positive effect at my school, as Rev-rend Al's mommy transferred him to another one. Though I tried to sleep through as much of my point making, "preventative" hoosegow stay as possible I couldn't sleep, maybe because the restraining nightmare was ushered in out of sequence. I also couldn't take the confinement and the professional inmates' renditions of "funny and cool" jail stories constantly told by the mingling said inmates, which I didn't find funny and cool at all, though I thought it best

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under the circumstances to provide the obligatory guffaws, and there was no Winnie, and, and, and The "playful" jail badinage was merely depressing. It was as if the inmates had fully accepted that this was how their lives were going to be, and that they were perfectly happy, jovial, and capable of handling it. If that's what they wanted it was Jake with me, unless they tried to impose their notions of nolo-contendre nirvana on yeztruly.

I turned the doorknob and let the door swing open, semi-expecting to see someone with a rifle out to save the county a few bucks. All I saw was one portly female behind a clear plastic partition to my right. She didn't even look up, and just continued to grunt and shuffle some papers on the desk she stood at, making faces as if some arresting cop had again done their paperwork indecipherably or otherwise abominably, as if her job responsibilities were something more than filing the papers in the right slot. To my left was a holding tank which held three detoxing luses, each with a hand, leg, or some combination thereof uncontrollably shaking like the flame of a candle in blustery weather. They all looked in my direction for a few seconds, but when seeing me in street rags must have concluded that I was neither a doctor nor fellow inmate, and one gave me

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an undulating bird, which I found mildly amusing and helpfully relaxing under the circumstances.



I walked directly to the front door which I found not to be locked, this one not any particular surprise, and stepped out into the unlit, fog enhanced darkness. That left only ten feet to go to get to the stockade fence and the perched snipers stationed at close intervals thereupon. I could only semi-see one and he seemed to be sleeping with his noodle calmly and comfortably dangling awkwardly in his chest, like a grateful recipient of a lynching.

The workmen's ladder left conveniently by the fence convinced me that I was doing exactly what they wanted me to do. When I got

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over the fence I crawled on my belly a few hundred feet making any shot more difficult, just in case some government, rogue, counter contra element was involved, until I was off the prison property and on the main road. Since no one had shot at me despite every opportunity, I was now certain that I was being tailed by the fed contras, and the only thing I could do about that was try to slip them or as a lesser but easier alternative, make their presence and operation obvious to the point of embarrassing absurdity. The problem with the latter approach were the heavy odds against being pursued by a corrupt fed agent bright enough to recognize the absurdity as absurd, thereby producing a profound embarrassment capable of making him not perform beyond the "legitimate and technically justifiable excuse for failure" modus operandi, most workable with the transferring Dingess, game playing types.

I wondered if I should take it on the arches or to try hitching a ride. Some people were chuckleheaded enough to pick up strays near the County jail, and some of those weren't nutcases in search of a thrill. For me another uninformed decision was necessitated by what seemed to be the manifestation of a dictate of a metaphysically randomized fate.

That said, on another plane, I was still young and sufficiently conditioned or in condition that I could have walked home with

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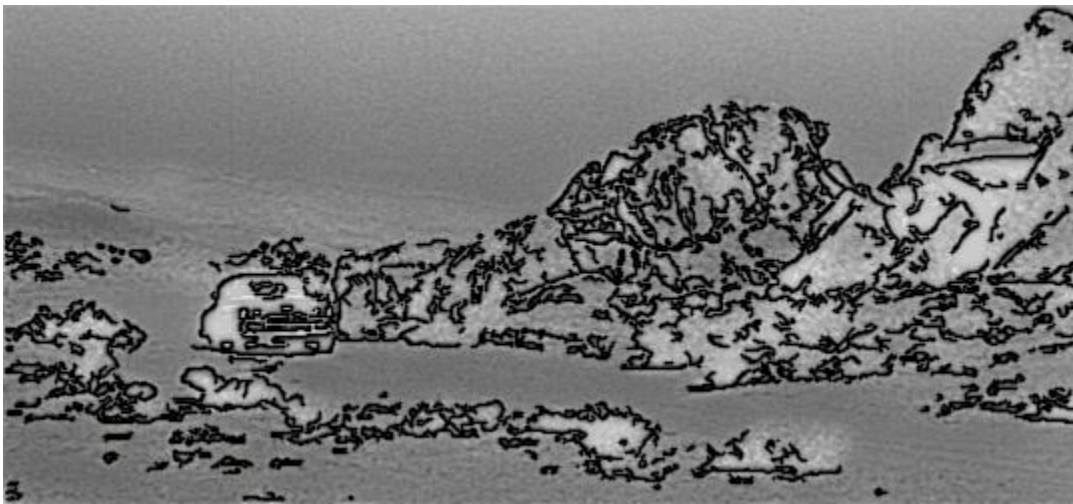
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minor difficulties imposed by things kids left on the sidewalks and roads, arriving a tad worn, but I was lazy and insistent upon an "improvement" provided by the work of someone else, that perhaps something I had gleaned from the observable operations of the feral fed government.



The Long Trip Home

If that was not previously obvious I had decided that it was worth trying to hitch a ride back home to get my roscoe, some scratch, and heap before entering the big, wicked city of Chicago.



That I was hitchin' near the County Jail in Rockford meant that in addition to the possibilities of an idiot, a fed scab, and/or a thrill deficient nutcase, I might be picked up by a bounty hunter. A small but industrious and well-armed contingent of "law and order," depression-proof, aficionados of misdirected vigilantism were rumored to prowl the road. The governmental supportive, policy dexterous players of the game knew that Rockford County paid a few hundred simoleons to anyone who brought back an escaped prisoner, dead or alive, and that that

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escapee was a duck soup mark, as he wouldn't be carrying any hardware right after the break. It didn't take long for a jalopy driving with its lights off to slow down before coming to a full stop near me.

I could tell that the driver and only occupant wanted to be seen as a Navajo as he was wearing a Concho containing a geometric pattern, a collarless shirt, and moccasins. His hair was held off his mug by a head band tied in a knot at the back. He was not smiling as he leaned toward the open side window. He said nothing, but held out his right hand palm up as if to say; "Well, you want a ride or not?"



I know that I shouldn't have, but I got in and sat unarmed in the shotgun seat. The Navajo was totally demented or on serious multiple hallucinogenics. He kept asking me for directions back

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to the reservation in Gallup. Though I could be only 99% certain, I figured that this wasn't a part of any government surveillance or bounty hunting effort. I was more worried that the boiler would stay on the road. Not only was the Navajo obviously nowhere near where he said he wanted to be, he kept on driving with the lights off.

I mentioned this to him, and he said that he didn't want to be seen, which made as much sense as anything else. The rather bizarre events of the evening had multiplied, re-enforcing themselves so well, that I was feeling quite insipidly normal.



He offered me \$400 to drive him back to the reservation in Gallup, New Mexico. Both hands off the wheel, he held an approximate \$5,000 wad of cash in his hands, showing it to me, like someone doing a card dodge. I mean he put it was right within my reach. He was leaning forward, grinning and staring at the cabbage. I could have easily taken it right off him and

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thrown him out, but I'm not like that. I only steal from the dirty government.



Wondering if this was some sort of test, I told him; "You keep that and don't show it to anyone else. You can get back to the reservation duck soup. I don't have as far to go. After you drop me off at my home, just follow the signs to Route 66 West, and stay with it all the way to LA. Then make a left."

He looked like someone dazed, who was using his last remnants of speed to keep him up after a three day binge. Or maybe happy like a kid on his first Christmas. He started bumping gums and a lot of it wouldn't have made any sense at all had I not already had been overdosed with bizarre events that evening. The continuation of any type of "unusual" events make them become as null and normal as federal governmental crime.

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