

## On the Night of His Last Falling

By Flint McGlaughlin

November 2012

*I cannot reach him...I can see him, faintly, through the haze of darkness, across the gaping chasm. He is poised on the ledge, a tiny shadow, thrusting upward from the stone, back arched, head high, a matador. My God! What is he seeing? "Son! Son!" I have called to him again and again. He does not answer. I am not sure he hears. The wind is fierce, treacherous, blasting its will through the granite. "My Son!" There is no reply. **What is he thinking?***

Shall I leap? I stand alone on the edge. I cannot estimate the distance down.

But then, I have fallen before, and farther than this height.

And while this impact may be more sudden, it could not be more terminal.

Still I wonder what will it feel like, the RUSH? There are many ways to end, but I am drawn to this one. I want to feel the rush, the final RUSH.

The sweet RUSH...

In the early years, I only came to the edge to peer, to fathom.

But everything changed on the night of my first falling. On that night I "went over".

And whether I slipped, or whether I stepped is of little import. Either way I came too near, for with the edge comes the risk.

Indeed, first comes the risk, then comes the RUSH, then comes the death.

The first death is a dying, a process, prolonged. The last is a terminus, an event, sudden.

In between? A thousand bitter ends cumulating like spasms of agony.

No resurrections, just greater degrees

...of death.

*I cannot help him. He leans further into the void...His body statuesque, graceful, ready. Dear God! He is so lost. I have tried to warn him. But he cannot find rest. Life is too much for him. Faith is not enough for him. What will it take to restore this poor child? "My Son! Please! Come away!" My voice is shrill, impotent against the stark, cold slab. "Son!" It leaps from this edge towards the other, but cannot make the bound. The wind is unyielding. **How is he standing?***

Shall I leap? I did not ask this question the first time I fell. I was only drawn to the edge.

I craved something on the other side.

The sweet RUSH...

It was so potent. I could feel it before I felt it. I had to get closer. I had to know.

Could it be so delicious?

Closer, still closer, even closer I strained. Could I reach its edge without leaving this one?

"You will not surely die", I heard the lie and I loved the lie before I loved the fall.

The lie extended my grasp. It took me beyond, beyond my base, over, over the void.

Gravity did the rest.

I was falling before I fell, and I was oblivious. But the RUSH did not seem a fall.

On the contrary, it seemed a rise – my essence rising up out of the void.

A freedom, ecstatic freedom

...then death.

*I cannot stop him. He stretches forth his arms, lifting them higher, still higher. Is this worship? No. It cannot be. "My Son! Step back! You are too close!" He is afraid, broken, weary, but reasoned. He will not go. I know. I am his Priest, his Confessor. Oh God! Is he singing? Chanting? "Son!" He does not answer, but somehow his eyes find mine. And even through the torrent, across the ragged span, I see it, or perhaps I sense it. **Why is he smiling?***

Shall I leap? I am not Camus, judging whether life is worth living.

I am Sisyphus judging whether death is worth dying.

And I do not judge by the value of the "ceasing", but only by the value of the rushing

The sweet RUSH.

My God the RUSH is beautiful, seductive, virile. I die so I can live in between the dying.

And the life between the dying is more alive than the life before the dying.

So that gradually, the falling becomes a leaping. Intentional. Exultant.

But I do not leap towards the bottom (we seldom do); I leap into the RUSH.

Can a fleeting moment be worth the risk of eternal nothingness? Pascal might reconsider;

It all depends upon what you find on either side.

And I have found less on the right and more on the left.

The body's judgment is as good as the mind's. And the fare at the well-set table is bland.

You who dispense judgment cannot save me with your talk of absurdity. I am not fleeing life,

I am only seizing it, "densifying" it, loving it

...to death.

*I cannot see him. He is gone...truly gone. What did I miss? He did not fall...My God, he leaped! He leapt, like a child. Playful, intentional. "Oh my Son, my Son". You did not lose your step. You left the path. You disappeared in a rush of darkness. Why did you abandon all hope? I thought you knew. Even through the pain...If you would have only returned, only repented. There is peace for all who come. But you cannot come for you are gone. Forever. Oh but **where are you going?***