



SEVEN NIGHTMARES
BRANDON FREELS



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Drain ...	05
The Coffin ...	08
The Walls ...	10
The Juice ...	13
The Sack ...	16
The Glasses ...	19
The Hamburger ...	22

THE DRAIN

I was stripped of everything but my socks. A large collar was placed around my neck that was, in turn, attached to a chain that connected to the back wall. The room had concrete walls, and the only light came from a window in the ceiling. There was a door, the only way out, but I couldn't see it because it blended in with the walls and all the walls looked the same. It was just a boring room made of gray walls and a drain in the floor. I didn't recognize it. I had never been there before.

When the light from the window hit me, snot came out of my nose, flushing out and spreading like an oil spill throughout the room. I knelt down over the drain to try and direct the snot into the hole. The snot was thick like maple syrup, and it slowly piled on the drain's guard as if it were too thick to pass through. My socks got soggy. There's nothing worse than wet socks.

The drain's guard popped up and slid slightly to the side, like someone removing a manhole. A strange gargle came from the drain and then a gasp for air, as if something had been struggling to breathe. From within the drain, two small hands popped out, grabbing onto the ledge. The hands had white gloves on that reminded me of the kind Mickey Mouse would wear. I watched as something was trying to lift itself out of the drain. The hands struggled to get a grip on the snot covered floor, but when they did I found that they were connected to two stringy arms, that were ultimately attached to a large snake that pulled itself out of the drain and into the puddle of thick snot.

The snake was something like an anaconda, but its eyes were human. It seemed endless as it pulled itself out of the drain. It must have been eighteen feet long, and after it pulled itself out, it began circling me, using its thin arms to drag its snake body around on the snot-covered floor. When it passed by my ass, I felt its tongue slither between my ass cheeks, and I was afraid that it might try to enter my asshole, but it didn't. Its eyes didn't leave me once as it circled me. I thought it might speak to me, but it never did.

When it came close to me it began nibbling on my leg like it was tasting me. Frightened, I picked up my heel and smashed the snake's head. Repeatedly, I pounded its skull. It let out a few cries, like an animal being crushed under a car tire, until it was no longer moving. I grabbed its head and noticed it had human teeth instead of fangs. I wrapped my hands around the snake's jaw and began pulling it apart, splitting it in two with my bare hands. Its blood mixed with my snot. I never imagined that the insides of a snake were anything like the insides of a human. I always thought they were just shafts of flesh. I was shocked to learn that a snake might actually have a heart.

THE COFFIN

A bee stung me in the middle of the chest, directly on my sternum. It felt like I'd been punched. As I fell backward, my left arm stretched out, landing in a pile of dog shit. The shit was a thick paste, and the more I tried to clean it off, the more it covered my hand and arm.

My mother wasn't happy about the shit, but she was more upset by the grass stains on my clothes. The bee's stinger in my chest started to feel as if it were alive. It grew. It grew in length and girth, swelling into something large. It throbbed and thrusted. From the part I could see sticking out of my chest, it looked like a railroad spike made of muscles and veins. It pierced through my back and burrowed its way into the dirt, worming its way to freedom.

Because of this, my body was broken, and my mother held me in her arms. I couldn't feel my fingers or any of my appendages. I could only stare at the white clouds and cliché blue sky. My mother stripped off my stained clothes but didn't replace them. Instead, she put cowboy boots on my feet and placed my naked body in a wooden coffin that stood on end. The coffin was placed on our porch for three days, and people would come by and look at me.

On the last day, two cherubic twins walked by and began taking photos of me with their iPhones. I thought of those photos on Instagram and felt my face turn bright red, but no one else noticed. I watched the twins hop around with their short and stout bodies. Their stomachs extended out like balloons that needed to be popped. Their arms and legs were short, like a baby's. One of the twins had a light mustache that could only be seen around the corners of its mouth, while the other had long flowing hair that covered its udder-like breasts.

An old man in a tracksuit approached them and said, "It looks like we're having an open casket funeral." He stroked his crotch while saying this, and the twins rushed some rope around the coffin, then lowered it down into a hole. The old man began shoveling dog shit onto me, and I tried to call out for my mother, but I couldn't move my mouth. I thought I felt something in my heart move, like a feeling of some kind, but it was probably just some maggots eating.

THE WALLS

The nurse told me to take a seat. There was only a rocking chair in the corner. The room had pink walls. She disappeared behind a metal door that was like the kind you'd find in a submarine. It had a wheel you turned to open and lock it. Next to the rocking chair was a coffin with a small transistor radio. The coffin was made of plywood and shaped like a diamond. When I turned on the radio, it began playing "Song to the Siren." I thought about how you told me you'd swallowed a bottle of pills while listening to that song. It was going to be the last thing you ever heard. But you didn't die.

After the song ended, the walls of the room turned red. A low, pulsating hum came from one of them. That wall, in particular, seemed to become flesh. It bulged out, ripe and round, with a dark spot in the middle. It reminded me of a giant breast. A spout seemed to erect itself out of the dark spot. I put my hands on it and squeezed out a marble of some sort, which dropped out of the spout and onto the floor. I picked the marble from the ground and whipped the strange milky slime from it. The marble felt solid. It felt like some kind of mineral.

There was a small hole in the coffin about the size of the marble, and I inserted it into the hole. It fit perfectly like a coin would into a slot machine. For a few seconds after this, the coffin shook violently. A thick black oil began gushing out of the hole. Afraid I had done something wrong, I inserted my index finger in the hole to plug it. The oil was warm and sticky like a syrup. But when I tried pulling my finger out, it was stuck.

The nurse came back and saw me struggling with my finger in the hole. I felt like I had been caught doing something wrong. She told me to relax and to breathe. Following her instructions, my finger seemed to shrink. I was able to pull it out now, but it was tiny and shriveled. The nurse put the radio on the ground. From her pocket, she pulled out a key, which she used to unlock the coffin from a keyhole on one of its sides. Before opening the coffin, she took the radio and plugged it into an outlet in the corner of the room.

As she began lifting the lid off the coffin, the smell of vomit permeated from its insides. There was a body of some kind inside, but it was covered by the black oil. I couldn't tell if it was male or female. I couldn't even tell if it was human or animal. All I could see, shining out of the black ooze, was a set of bright white teeth with the marble clamped between them. Using some large tweezers, the nurse pulled the marble out of the teeth. This caused the liquid to slurp its way back into the body through the opening between the teeth. The closer the liquid got to the teeth, the more it formed a texture that was almost brain-like in appearance.

I could see the body more clearly as the sludge re-entered it, but its sex was still undetermined. Its skin was white, and covered in varicose veins. Its body was covered with hair, and it appeared to have claws, at least on its feet. There were large scars and burns on its arms. I couldn't help but imagine they were self-inflicted. The nurse turned the radio on, again playing "Song to the Siren," and put the radio inside of the coffin. After she closed and locked the lid, she put a piece of scotch tape over the hole.

I looked at the walls and noticed they had turned purple, even the one that looked like a breast. The overhead light began to pulse on and off. The nurse told me the doctor was ready to see me. My body started shaking involuntarily as if it had taken up a mind of its own. Whatever was in control of my body was completely at odds with my own control. The struggle was real. I felt my mind leave my body and into the beating light. Mostly what I remember is the anxiety and my spazzing, revolting body.

THE JUICE

I was just a boy. I came home from school and he asked I me who I was. He was sitting on the sofa. In the kitchen a woman laughed. I could hear her through the wall. Her laugh was like a horse's neigh. She entered the living room and brought him a glass of juice. The juice was a pale yellow. He opened his mouth and tilted his head back as she poured the juice down his throat. He gagged a little and spit some of it back up. His eyes rolled back.

She handed me the glass. "Finish it!" I wasn't sure. I put the glass to my lips but tried not to drink it. "Finish it!" The taste was sweet but chalky. "Finish it!" I felt the juice being rejected by my body. She glared at me, then

snorted. I could feel the juice coming back up. I held my mouth shut, but the pressure was too much for me. My eyes rolled back as I vomited into the air.

My guts felt like they were changing. I felt my intestines shake and shiver, then unravel like a snake. I took my clothes off and curled up on the carpet. I thought if I made myself small enough the pain would go away. But my body continued to unravel, like a knot being undone. Intestines. Veins. Muscles. My skin became a sack of loose parts. My body was no longer unified. I had a hard time concentrating. I grew dizzy. I felt my skin start to balloon. Everything became pressurized.

I could still see the man sitting on the couch. He hadn't moved. His mind was somewhere else. I couldn't see his eyes, but I wonder if they were still rolled back. For a moment, I thought he looked like my father. She walked circles around me. Her legs trotted like a deer's. "I want to see your face!" she said. As she said this, another man came through the front door. I remember he was wearing a white coat, the kind a waiter would wear. His arms seemed strange. They were hairless and longer than his legs. He was holding a vacuum cleaner and began running a small squeegee across my skin like he was pretending to shave my body. "Your face!" she said, "I want to watch your face when he sticks it in."

I felt something sharp puncture my bellybutton. I wondered what she wanted with my face. She turned the vacuum on, and he inserted the nozzle of the vacuum inside my new puncture wound. As this happened, I

felt all the pressure inside my skin go away. My body began to shrink and condense. I was deflating. Blood flowed freely in me. I was whole again, and I no longer felt any shame. I looked at the vacuum bag. It was overflowing with a substance I can only identify as ectoplasm. Following this, my body briefly grew stiff and hard. The pressure was gone, but my muscles and bones become frozen and taut. It was in this moment that I felt my cock get hard for the very first time. “Your face,” she said, touching my cheek, “Look at your face.”

THE SACK

It's hard to believe there's as much shit in me as there is. I found a hole in the ground. I could hear the shit in me. I found the hole in the middle of the grass. It was big enough for a man to crawl inside, and after about four feet it curled off, tunneling into the earth. I squatted over the hole and let the shit out of me, a mess of barely formed turds and a piss-like fluid. The escape from my bowels felt like it lasted for hours, but it was really only minutes.

When I tried to move away from the hole, my foot slipped on the edge, and my body slid down into the tunnel. It was covered with dry old shit and new wet shit. Other people must have been shitting in this hole. The shit coated

my arms and back as I slid. It felt like I was going to slide forever, but the tunnel spit me out into a room with walls made from white bricks. The bricks looked like little cakes stacked on top of each other. There was an odd brick lying on the ground. It sent out a hard light that lit up the entire room. It was like a lightbulb but rectangular. It put off no heat.

I held that glowing brick over my head and found a narrow passageway cut in the cake wall. It led to an adjoining room, one built from smaller, unrefined bricks. They could almost be described as rocks. At the center of the room was a fishnet sack hanging from the ceiling. It was full of shit, grass, and twigs. It looked like a nest. When I touched it, the sack began to sway. Flies flew out of the sack as it moved. They stuck to my body, but only to the parts that were covered in shit.

I noticed a strange eye in the sack that moved quickly through the grass, mud, and feces. It was a human eye, but even without a human body it was still alive and moved on its own. It was followed by a hand and what looked like a forearm. They were connected somehow. The hand and arm extended out of the sack as one unit, followed by another hand and another arm and another, all lifting themselves out of the sack. These arms extended from the sack like a spider's arms would from its abdomen. There could have been six arms, but maybe there were more. An awkwardly shaped blob grew up from the sack, simulating a head. Its hair was matted and clung together. The eye was at the center of the head.

Dripping through rips in the sack I could make out what looked like fatty growths. They jiggled and flopped like old breasts. The more they moved, the more excited I got, and a strange pink matter started coming out of my nostrils. I don't know what the pink matter was, but it was something from inside of me. I was afraid it was my brains. It covered my face, crawling its way over my ears and mouth until I found all my facial orifices, except for my eyes, encased in it. I remember the brick began to pulsate like a strobe light, and I heard someone say something. They said a word. It was something that sounded like "home."

THE GLASSES

Her body was covered in dirt. Her hair was matted together. She looked emaciated, but her will was still strong. She sat on top of me and held me down. I couldn't move. There was something about her that made my cock hard. I begged her to stop, but she fucked me regardless. It felt like the skin of my cock was being ripped off. After I came, she squatted by a tree and scooped the cum out with her fingers.

I felt empty and soulless lying there. I hated her for what she had done to me. She grabbed the glasses off my face and smashed them on a rock before running off into the woods with my clothes. All I could do was look up at the sky and the tall trees around me. It felt like my body was no longer

mine. I was someone else. I could no longer move my body. Depression paralyzed me like some kind of evil. And then I slept.

I awoke as a large bear was carrying me deeper into the forest. It seemed to stand on two legs and walk like a human. At first, it held me in its two front paws, like a bride being carried across a threshold. I was too exhausted to resist. I just wanted to sleep. I could still see without my glasses, but not very clearly. The bear must have grown tired of carrying me in its two front paws because it thrust my body over one of its shoulders like a sack of potatoes.

The further we went into the forest, the colder it got. It began to snow, and the sky turned black and purple. We came upon a large mud hut. I could hear the sound of feral chickens nearby. Next to the hut, I saw what looked like a ruined chicken coop. The hut was very primitive but efficient. There was a fire pit in the middle, and next to the pit was a small coffin. I don't know what the coffin was made from, but it was transparent. You could see right through it. Placing me in the corner of the hut on a small stoop, the bear filled the coffin up like a sauce pan. It placed a number of ingredients inside: plants, herbs, honey, cockroaches, and ladybugs. It also poured what appeared to be a jar of piss into the coffin, perhaps its own. The bear knew what it was doing.

I could move a little, but the exhaustion was overwhelming. I felt like a statue made of oatmeal. The bear came over to me and, using one of its claws, opened a large wound on my left arm. Blood came out of the wound and spilled into a golden chalice of some kind. The bear was not without

empathy. It put the chalice down for a moment and attentively dressed my wound in a moss gauze.

After caring for me, it took the chalice over to the coffin and poured my blood inside the coffin. Placing the coffin over the fire, it stirred the ingredients like a soup. The ingredients started cajoling together to create some kind of flesh pile. Whatever it was, it was alive, molding into the shape of an infant human child. The infant kicked the walls of the coffin like it would the stomach of a mother. I didn't see an umbilical cord or placenta. There was nothing that showed any form of dependency.

As the child started to cry and coo, the bear took the coffin off the fire. Picking up the infant, the bear held it before me. It was a girl. I thought for a minute and named her Phaedra. My body was still exhausted. I felt like I had been drugged. The bear put a pair of sunglasses over my eyes. It wrapped a poncho over my naked body. I couldn't tell if this was an act of modesty, or if it was worried that I was too cold.

THE HAMBURGER

I was asleep when Allison began pounding my face with her fists. She kept pounding, and I faded in and out of blackness. I only came to after she left. Looking in the mirror, I noticed my face had changed. It was a mess of craters. My mouth, nose, and eyes were hardly visible underneath the shifted skin.

She left a note on the mirror that read: "I'm very vulnerable and sad right now, and you're ugly and fat. I could never live my life with someone as gross as you." I tried putting my face back together. Using my fingers, I shifted the crushed parts of my face to where they belonged, but the skin always snapped back. My face was impossible to mend.

I left and wandered down Fort Hamilton Parkway. Somewhere passed the Burger King, I found a hamburger on the ground. It was larger than a normal hamburger, about the size of a medium pizza. I lifted the top bun and looked at the patty inside. The meat didn't look like regular hamburger meat. There were small golden, metallic squares cooked in with it, the same way someone would mix in onions. The meat glowed.

I poked two eyeholes in the meat and wrapped the patty around my face like a mask. Through the eyeholes the world looked different. One eye saw the world as yellow, while the other was dark red, like the color of blood.

I walked back to the Burger King and noticed that on the back wall near a yellow bollard there was a hole of some kind. Through the eyes of the mask the hole looked like two lips sucking. It was like the lips of a giant person, only slightly wider than a door. But the skin around the lips, which somehow blended in with the wall, looked chapped and torn. Around the lips gathered a large cloud of flies, mosquitos, and other bugs.

As I got closer I heard someone crying from within the lips. It sounded like Allison. I grabbed a broomstick that I found lying near the employee entrance, and used the handle to pry the lips open. The lips gave little resistance, and when I first saw the teeth inside they astounded me. Each tooth was about the size of my hand. They were a piss-stained color. The tongue was like a living thing. It moved left to right and back again. It was like the tail of some kind of large wet dinosaur.

Inside the lips, on top of the tongue, I saw Allison, but she was younger, and her body was like a child's. She was wearing some kind of soccer uniform and cleats. Curled up in a ball, with her head towards her chest, I don't think she even noticed I was there. Because of the mask, I don't think she would have recognized me even if she did.

I reached in and pulled her out of the lips. Her clothes were covered with a type of spit, or ectoplasm. The inside of the lips smelled rotten, like the ocean does sometimes. Her body was limp when I laid her down on the concrete, but when a car passed by she jolted up, and ran away.



