



EUTAXIS/Karatic wheel Light of Artyo collage by Angel Brynner. 2020 Additional image credits Kipargeter & marfo_luengo

chapter ten

She opened her eyes.

a glimmer appeared at the edge of a landscape of gravelly dunes, the aftermath of the destruction necessary to clear out old foundations prior to building anew.

a panicky heat was in the air as the glimmer moved towards the holocaust that always made up her horizon line. wandering past the dunes under raw skies had made her teeth feel as if she was chewing on aluminum, making the sudden flatness around her both the Light of Artyo's blessing and her curse.

the last ember of light inside of her trembled under the cycle of chills and fever she had become used to after so long out in the desert. she was so overwhelmed by the symptoms that she didn't notice anything ahead of her until the screams and moans snapped her out of her inner diagnostic. she stopped short of slamming into a sudden outcropping of steel, craning her head up in bewilderment.

the Light of Artyo stared up into the karmic wheel of NYC life, an enormous Ferris wheel fashioned out of half-crushed subway cars that now creaked and clanged so loudly that she had to cover her ears.

a metallic green sky bellowed out behind it, out from the center of the universal torture device. graffiti-tagged and keyed up at heights she couldn't even focus her eyes to, the wheel hovered above scores of discarded train compartments and dried bones. one at a time, mechanical arms descended from the clouds, ripping out rusty train cars full of screaming people from one direction, seamlessly fitting another less weathered train car in from the opposite side as the first plummeted to the rocky earth below.

all the wagons were chock full of spirits who had paid their way onto them, yelling the unintelligible things that used to shoot out from the eyes of true New Yorkers on the dreariest of days. it was a hostile pitch that was their divine right, bestowed upon surviving that first year, a pitch systematically destroyed by finding out that the races they'd spent their lives thinking they had to run had amounted to nothing but self-desecration in the end.

the sounds of the wails of despair and the rickety whirl of the machinery blended together like the music of the spheres diffusing through bleached blond curls and seeping into her sun-stroked head. sporadically, souls with no more regrets to give to the machine crawled through broken windows and took majestic swan dives in the direction of the ground as low-flying clouds swung by.

the Light of Artyo leaped with each jump a courageous spirit took, felt herself hurtling with hope to the parched ground she was already weighed down to. each attempt at escape made the air around her shake, somehow tricking her legs into feeling a little bit stronger, encouraging her to walk on a few steps more.

as she continued, "away from" being the clearest concept of direction she had, out of the corner of her eyes she saw the dry-rotted squalor of the remnants of old schoolmates and once fundamental friendships as they lay in utter waste, harshly bleached of all life for attempting to heal sores across her spirit that she'd never been able to admit she suffered from. petrified people resembled driftwood. her inability to make due with things that had been done had ruined many a soul's faith in friendship and the healing powers of a god most had long ago lost anyway.

soon she had gotten so far past the wheel that it was only a faint flower of steel on the lower horizon line. it was then that she knelt and said a small prayer of forgiveness for all that she had done to others and all that had been done to her. her knees cracked as her face turned down, eyes closed in avoidance of a swoon. her sun-burnt fingertips drew circles in the sand to steady herself.

