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The Timeshare Muse

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I was thirty-three when I discovered I was God.

A late evening in August, I sat by the desk in my study, the moon hiding behind the clouds, the sound of tow trucks still in my ears. There was nothing on television that night, so I put my pen to the paper and words started to pour out of me – words of indiscernible beauty, turning into sentences, pages, a narrative of unequalled genius.

None of this came from me, of course. The inspiration came from outside – from my muse, gods, the spirit of Proust or Kafka, or a combination of both? A new channel had been installed to supply me with the insights and skills to write my own classic. As I sat there, I was taken over by a Light so strong it blinded me – and after a few minutes I *was* the Light. I kept on writing like a lunatic, the moon hiding behind the clouds, the sound of tow trucks still in my ears. *Somehow, I knew that I'd found my true home where everything was possible.* I could write whatever I wanted: haiku poems, medieval sonnets, Swedish crime fiction – I was, after all, the creator of the universe and every idea in the history of thought was available to me.

When I finished writing, I let out a sigh. Outside, the morning was a lemony yellow, the sun shining indiscriminately on apple trees and lawn mowers. There was a raccoon in the garden munching on marigolds. I devoured a bagel with cream cheese, knowing that unknown worlds lived inside of me; eagles of beauty hibernated and laid their eggs inside of me.

Two days went by. I was sitting by my desk again, swallowed by the dark night; the moon was hiding behind the clouds, the sound of tow trucks still in my ears. I started to read the pages I'd written, with the humility you would expect from someone in the presence of Holy Writ – and I kept on reading into the night, my mouth open and dry. But when I finished, I knew one thing for sure: my



pages were absolute *shit!* What I had written was childish, stupid, and predictable *drive!*

How could I have been so wrong? Why hadn't the beauty I experienced been channeled to the page? I pondered this for a while, as I paced up and down the floor of my study, banging my head against radiators. I thought of those strange ghosts that lived inside of me, and I wanted to honor their genius – I wanted to honor my *own* genius, which was so much larger than anyone else's.

So, I sat down again, the moon hiding behind the clouds, the sound of tow trucks still in my ears: New letters grew out of my pen and turned into words of bellicose beauty; crisp paragraphs rose like shiny cathedrals; paragraphs were catapulted from outer space and into my soul. However, this time something magical *did* happen – my hand moved by itself. The prose was thorny and twisted. My letters were huge as morgues; the g's suicidal bombers in baggy pants; the t's pornographers lusting for cheerleaders. The air got cold around me, as if an unknown entity sucked the warmth out of my text. A Higher Power was leading me and I continued for an eternity, feeling like an albatross floating through space.

When I woke up, I had no idea where I had been. Then I looked at the twenty pages in front of me. To my surprise, I had repeated one line again and again:

I want to kill you with an ice axe,

I want to kill you with an ice axe,

I want to kill you with an ice axe,

I want to kill you with an ice axe.

I stared at the pages in front of me, sweat pouring down my face. What was my muse trying to tell me – or was someone making fun of me? Or worse, did I have a muse at all? Perhaps I'd been forced to share my muse with much lesser writers. Could it be that she was a timeshare muse, a slut floating around space, waiting to download her "art" to the first hack she ran into?

Or was I the victim of some cruel, cosmic hoax?



For days, I considered never writing a word again. Maybe I wasn't meant to be the new Kafka or Murakami after all – or not even an accessible Proust? But in a rare vision, I saw the greatness of my own writing. *I want to kill you with an ice axe*, was definitely a simple line but a clear a reference to the artist's worst enemy, the ego – an ode to man's eternal struggle against icy ambitions. So what my text said was: don't strive for fame, just get rid of your ego and *write!*

After that brilliant realization, I got back in the flow. I closed my eyes, trusting that the words coming to me would be from the *right* source – not from demons, but from the finest muses available in the Heavens. Once more, I lost all sense of time and space. A cloud drifted into me, filling me up with prose. This work was going to be my gift to the world. This book wouldn't just help my career; it would be my gift to humanity and coming generations ... and I closed my eyes, tears flowing down my grateful cheeks. My muse had tested me before, but now I was the medium I'd always wanted to be. The prose came to me in significant spurts: *Faith is acceptance of which we imagine to be true, that which we cannot prove ... Life is full of secrets. You can't learn them all at once ...* and I went deeper into the zone, deeper into the chore of the collective unconscious where all art, philosophy, and memories are stored ... *When a question has no correct answer, there is only one honest response. The gray area between yes and no, silence ...* and I stayed there for several days or weeks, lost in the world of literature I was a co-creator of.

When I came out again, four hundred pages were lying in front of me. I sent the script to my editor, knowing that I had accomplished something unique. Actually, my writing was so special that I didn't even need to read it or edit it.

My editor, reeking of mouthwash, received me in her lavish office. "I read your script," she said. "You have copied *The Da Vinci Code* from start to finish."

I went pale, "What?"

"You have sent me a word for word transcription of *The Da Vinci Code*."



My editor threw the script at me, while all colors left my face.
Then I went out of the office, the moon hiding behind the clouds,
the sound of tow trucks still in my ears.