

Tell me, does it feel at times like you stand on a field of ash? The ground is soft and unfocused. It has settled as a carpet of gray... of burning embers that once were, but no longer are.

Looking up then from your feet to the sky above, it is oppressively dim. There is no sun, but your world is faintly illuminated by the orange hues of fire and brimstone flickering on the horizon. And then of course, there they are: meteor showers. They hurl through the atmosphere in a ball of silent fury. From where you stand, they are quietly blazing, small, harmless. They twinkle in your periphery when you look away. They are so far... Then, your field of vision shrinks to the ground next to you. An ember sits on the carpet of ash and watches you, pleading with you to notice it. "Look here" it calls out. "See me and be afraid. Turn back, bury yourself in the graveyard of what used to be. My kin once knew momentary warmth but now lay forever underneath where you stand. Even the rage of a meteor will suffocate in our vast ocean of stillness." After a minute of red pulsating, it dies. And it too joins the sea of gray.

Ah, the meteors draw nearer. The air is now warm, and there is a subdued roar tunneling down upon you. Another ember floats down and breathes its final breath before dying. Another, this one closer, brushes up gently against your skin. It singes your arm and falls. Oh to be a part of the gray... how alluring. To join in the tapestry of passed moments... of faded lights. To be part of something bigger, something incomprehensible, uninterpretable, intangibly complex. And you stand not as an ember, but as an observer: A witness to it all. You watch as the field of ash deepens, as it begins to cover your feet. The sparks in the air burn your skin and rip at your lungs, yes, but it is all... inevitable. You cannot be anywhere else because without you, there is no one to feel the softness of the ash. There is no one to notice the heat from the meteors and their embers. There is nothing that connects it all without *you*.

It's painful, isn't it? Having to be a part of it all. Having to experience fire at its hottest and when it is as cold as death. To see it all is to average the extremes... to put it all in perspective, a flattened, paved road of the marching of time itself. To understand the past, feel the present, and see the future. The witness can see it all at once. A hellish clarity of vision.

The meteors close the gap. Finally, a moment of respite. You exhale another breath. Just another flicker of heat, I guess.