

Ruinaton

January 1st, 1583

I am a failure. I am a failure, and you shall witness my failure and hopefully deteriorate the same as I once did – or that is the hope, at least, although I have come to the realisation that hope is a nonsensical drive that seeks to ruin. Hope *is* ruination. Now, do not think that I am being hyperbolic. I am incapable of being deemed average never mind something more than that or a false version of such. The only thing false is the self-portrait I look upon, as I write to you in this moment, which I am a pitiful caricature of – self-depreciation is the only exaggeration I am capable of. Nonetheless, I write this memoir with the motive of beginning anew but with the intention to display myself unveiled, and my only other form of delineation is through paper and ink. If I cannot complete my self-portrait, with the overwhelming rush of the river hiding behind me, then I will complete this memoir. So, as I throw down my bristled paintbrush and seize this delicate quill, prepare yourself for a sorrowful journey, following the main character: a pathetic version of the artist I will never be. Oh, and do not expect frequent diary entries from me either – I am what one would call: the ‘unreliable narrator’.

February 23rd, 1573

Hopeless, hollowed, hazel eyes peered into my soul. I did not recognise the person reflected back at me, shattered by the cracks that crawled over the mirror – it was something other, something that had given too much of itself, and received nothing in return.

March 6th

I felt the gentle breeze brush against the distant hand, that reminded me of a corpse, mimicking the assiduous stroke of the paintbrush against the bare canvas – a new canvas compared to the many, unremembered ones that preceded it, now, concealed in a decrepit closet covered by shadows. I knew that I was making progress, but it did not feel that way. It never did.

July

As futile progress was made, the days blurred together. As I gazed upon the alabaster skin of my self-portrait, I felt disgust rush through me like the relaxing river that hid behind my false self. Every time I paint more of myself, I realise how inadequate I truly am in comparison to my picturesque version that I have desperately designed in the hope that I will, impossibly, transform into it. I do not know why I bother hoping anymore...

December

I only ever allow myself to leave my home when it is winter although I should not really call my house a home – it has never felt like one to me. I relish in the biting breeze whose frost-bitten hands scramble over my ruined body. ***Mind you, my body is not truly ruined, but I once thought it was.*** These are the only moments I allow away from my work. The work that consumes me, until I am no longer... me.

April 1574

The warmth is beginning to dominate once again. It is obstructing me from my work. My oh! so frivolous work! I am surprisingly pained.

August

Progress is occurring. I can feel it. Progress, progress, progress! I do not understand why I become so ecstatic as I know that I will only vitiate this painting... eventually. Nevertheless, the background is almost complete. But that familiar, oppressive noise is devouring me once more. The more I paint the rapid river looming behind myself, the more the glistening light recoils, obscuring my sight. It advances into my ears and funnels down my throat until I feel I cannot breathe...

October

I am suffocating. My river is running its course.

January 1576

To my greatest despair, I decided to pause my work and focus upon myself... despite my work *being* myself. ***The break is supposed to symbolise my self-care, I suppose. Artists tend to appreciate symbolism, I think.*** Over this period, I have allowed myself to ponder not only my work, and myself in relation, but also my existence. Why am I an artist? Why am I a *failing* artist? Both these questions I repeatedly demanded answers to, only to realise that the answer can only come from myself. Leading me to my principal question, who am I? And what is the point of finding out who I am when I am nothing? I suppose this could be the universe's way of guiding me in the direction of becoming a fatalist. ***Sigh.*** But who am I to think that I have any significance regarding my place in the universe when I have no significance. At all.

December

I have come to realise that I never answered any of my questions!

This is why I am an artist: I am not. I attempt to express my emotions through my art when I cannot even *feel* my emotions. I have fallen into the vast depths of intellectualising my emotions, yet these depths are so vast these emotions are simply conceptual. This is why I am painting a self-portrait: the only thing that I truly know to be real is myself ***unfortunately*** and the impending doom of the river behind me swallowing me more and more until nothing will remain. Or is there already nothing remaining? No! There must be something remaining or-!

1578

Spirals are a means of enjoyment, are they not? The quantity of my spirals seem to increase along with the quantity of paint I ruin this canvas with. If I was intelligent, I would understand this correlation. But, either because of my ignorance, despair, or tendency to self-destruct, I simply cannot. I refuse to understand – or care. I have concluded that I *am* a fatalist – the term fits nicely with my river that continually accompanies both myself and my better-self. It seems I cannot escape.

July 1579

With this sweltering heat, yes, I *am* a fatalist. Indeed.

1581

October

November

December

January 2nd, 1583

I attempted to write more of my fruitless life. I truly did. Please believe me. If you think of me as anything after this, do not think of me as a *liar*. Nevertheless, the end is nigh. I have come to finally accept this, and I gratify myself for writing this, along with my acknowledgement of my deterioration and failure to finish my 'master-piece'. And, as the end approaches, so does my River of Sorrow, so does the end to this memoir. As I repose this delicate quill and demolish all my bristled paintbrushes, understand that I am proud of finishing something, if not my pitiful self.

- **Acheron.**