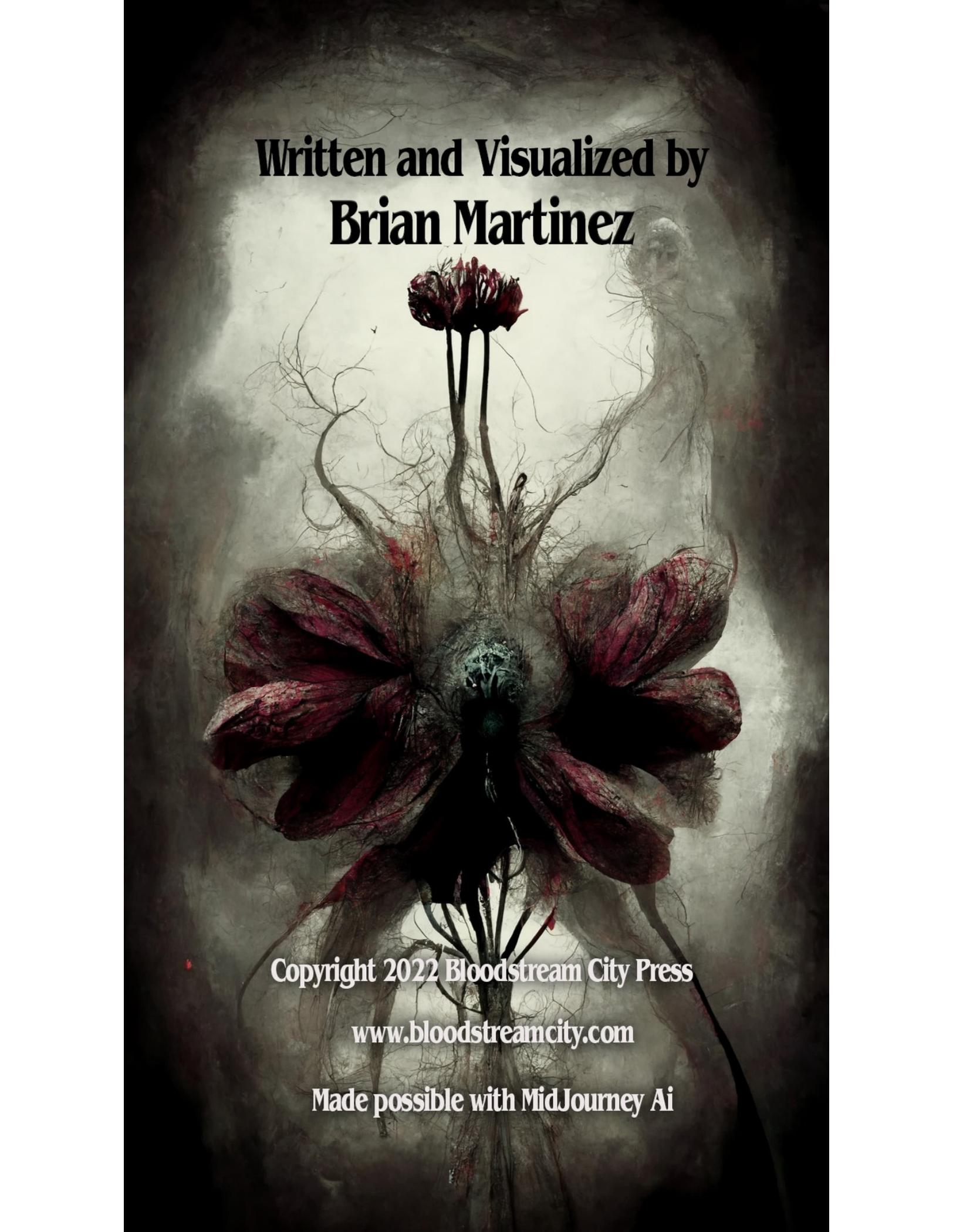




Brian Martinez

Lungflower





**Written and Visualized by
Brian Martinez**

Copyright 2022 Bloodstream City Press

www.bloodstreamcity.com

Made possible with MidJourney Ai

Victor was alone, but it hadn't always been that way.



He'd almost had a wife once.

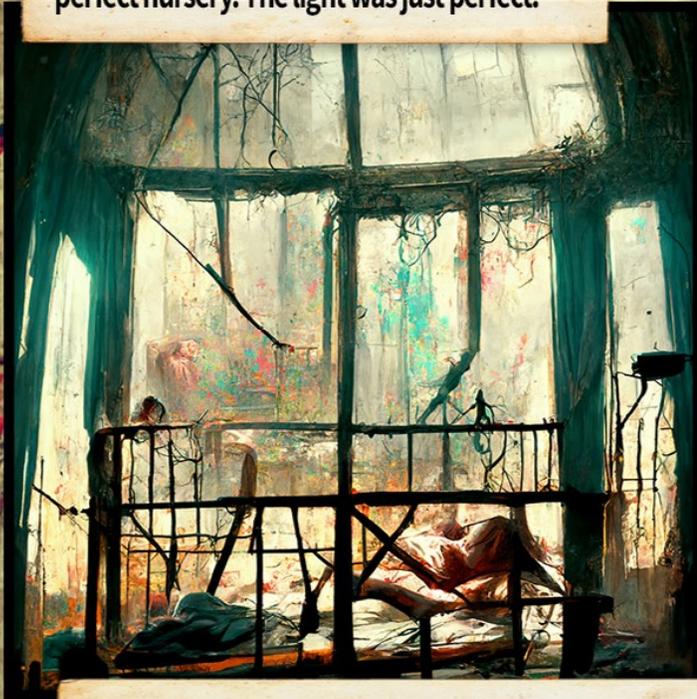


Victor lived in the last house on a dead end street. After he proposed to Iris, his high school sweetheart and still the most beautiful woman he'd ever met, he used his life savings to buy an old house in an old neighborhood.

The house was eighty years old. The roof sagged, mice ran behind the walls, half the electrical sockets were dead and it smelled of mildew, but he loved it. He loved it because it was theirs. Whenever he had the money, he put it into the house. Fixed it up, one room at a time.

First he painted and patched what was needed. Then he added a gazebo. Then an extra bedroom. It grew like a vine, imperfect but gradual progress, twisting and stretching toward the sun.

He told Iris the new bedroom would make a perfect nursery. The light was just perfect.



He should have taken the look on her face as a sign, but Victor was blinded by the future. He spent so much time staring into it, it left spots in his vision. Like all sunspots, they eventually became blind spots.

“You're distant” she told him one day.
“I'm right here,” he said, looking through a catalog.
“You are, but you aren't.”



He didn't understand what she meant, so he didn't take her seriously. She continued to tell him he was distant, sometimes at home, sometimes while they were at the store or in the car, or on the phone at work, until one night she told him she needed space.

Victor begged her to stay. He offered to sleep in the new bedroom. He'd give her all the space she wanted, time to figure things out. She packed her bags and left the next morning.



As he watched her pull away, out of the driveway he hadn't had the money to fix yet, he was struck with a sudden coughing fit. He'd never coughed like this before. It felt as if his lungs were filled up with thistles.



The cough worsened over the coming days. People at the office were annoyed by it, the constant sound, but he couldn't do anything about it. Medicine didn't work.

Tea didn't work. Honey didn't work. The more he tried to stop coughing, the worse it became. People told him to go to the doctor, but he didn't listen. They didn't know what they were talking about, and he didn't have the money to throw away on doctors.



There was still so much to be done on the house.

The days went on. Life moved at a crawl. Work. Home.
Work. Home. Asleep. Awake. Asleep. Awake.



Always tired. Always coughing.

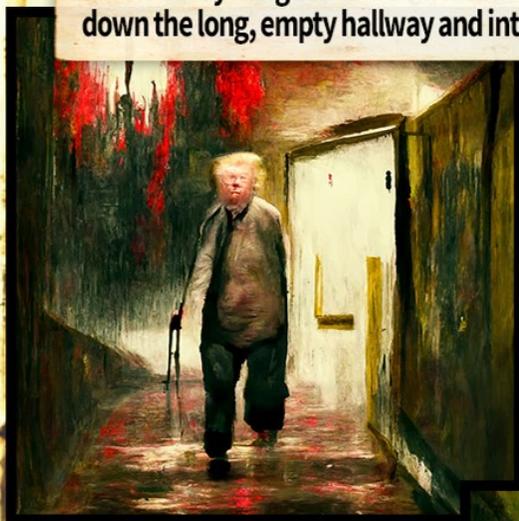
A painting of an elderly man with thinning hair, wearing a dark jacket and trousers, sitting on a simple wooden stool. He is looking down and to the right, away from the viewer. The room is dark and appears to be in a state of decay, with peeling walls and a window that looks out onto a bleak, overcast landscape with bare trees. The lighting is dramatic, coming from the window, highlighting the man's face and the textures of the room.

One morning, three months after Iris had left, three months though it felt like ten years, he woke up at the usual time for work and realized he couldn't do this any longer.

There was simply no point in showering. No point getting dressed. No point driving to work and sitting behind a desk and looking at all those people as they looked back at him either in pity or resentment, annoyed at his coughing.

There was no point in any of it anymore. It had taken him three months to see it, but now that he did, it was so clear. There was nothing left.

It took everything Victor had in him to get out of the big, empty bed, shuffle down the long, empty hallway and into the cold, empty bathroom.

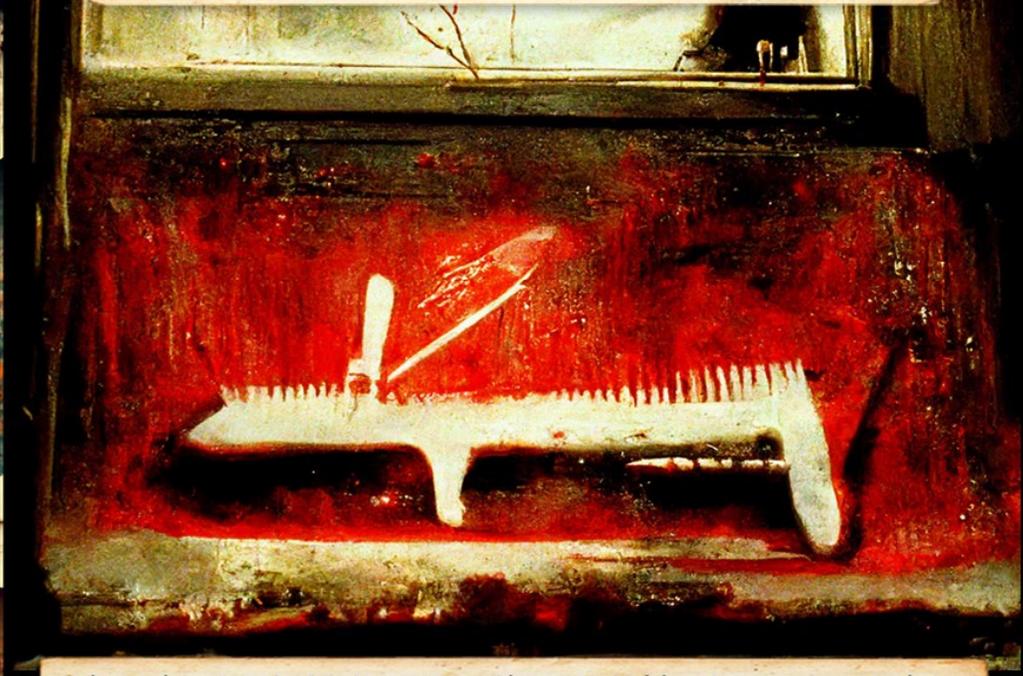


He coughed the entire way, the wet sound echoing off old walls, walls newly-painted to cover up the stains and the mold spots. The carpet under his feet hiding the worn-down flooring.



Victor looked at himself in the mirror above the leaky sink. The sad, tired man looked back at him. But Victor didn't see this. All he saw was a cloudy mirror with dark spots on its surface, the edges going silver-black.

A faint glimmer caught Victor's eye. Something shiny on the window-sill. It was a razor blade. He'd left it there after using it to remove some old masking tape from the window. The tape had baked onto the glass over the years. Why it was there in the first place, he didn't know.



Victor picked up the blade. He turned it over, admiring the way the morning light danced on its edge. It was the nicest thing in the whole bathroom. The newest and the cleanest. The brightest thing he'd seen in months.



He looked at the razor. Looked at his wrist. The vein pumping tired blood through his tired body. He lay the blade against his skin. "I'm sorry," he said to Iris, and to the house. They were all he'd be leaving behind.

A coughing fit struck him just then, the worst yet. He coughed so hard he couldn't breathe. Blue-green stars glittered in his vision. Fingertips went numb. The razor fell from his hand and clattered under the sink. He doubled over, knees shaking, and coughed into his open hands like his soul was leaving him.



On one, final cough that felt like it came from the very center of him, something came up. It was wet and heavy, and it slapped hard into his hand.



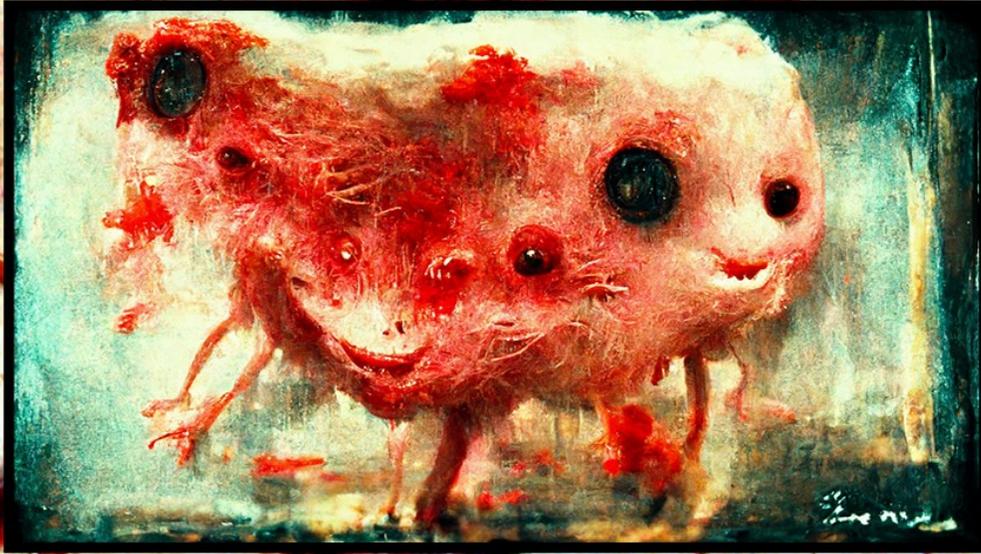
The coughing had stopped. He could breathe again. The stars in his eyes died and faded away. But his hand was warm. He opened it to see what was inside.



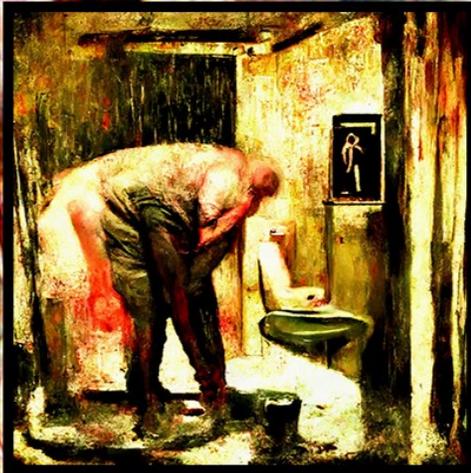
Victor had never seen a tumor before. It looked about what he expected it to look like. Pink and gray flesh gone wrong. Soft folds of abnormal growth. He should have been horrified. He should have been running to a hospital, scared for his life and begging to hear options.

But he felt nothing other than a vague sense of curiosity at the the ball of flesh in the center of his palm. He looked closer, fascinated to see what his body had been busy doing while he'd been doing so little.

As Victor watched, two of its folds parted, movement too deliberate to be the simple settling of wet flesh. And then, as he continued to watch the thing in his hand, a small cry came from it.



Here was the shock. Here was the terror. Victor felt a cold ball of it in his gut. Felt his eyes go wide and his throat squeeze tight.

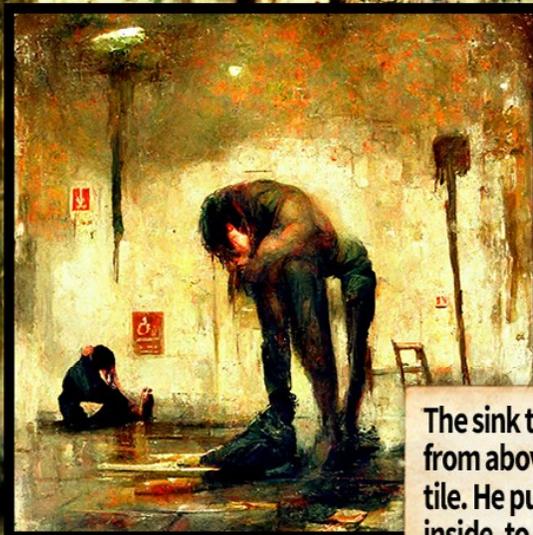


Horrified by the thing in his hands, Victor ran to the sink and turned the rusty faucet to full, thrusting his hands under the blast of hot water. The wet ball of tissue swirled around the old sink, pausing at the lip of the drain before the water washed it away.

For some reason he didn't understand, panic gripped him. Victor fumbled to turn off the faucet. He cut off the harsh flow of water from the spout, but it was too late. The ball of flesh tumbled down the drain, sucking down and out of sight.

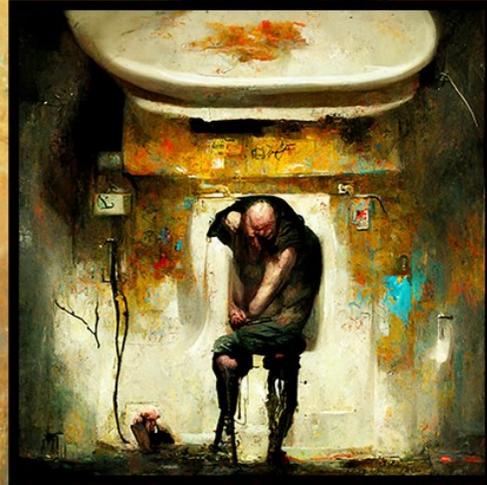


Victor was horrified by what he'd done. He dropped to his knees and grabbed the pipe underneath the sink. It was thick with rust and slime, his already wet hands nearly slipping free. Victor gripped the curved sink trap as tightly as he could and unscrewed both ends, fighting the years of rust and build-up as water sprayed his face and the wall and floor. He pulled so hard the pipe nearly ripped out of the wall.



The sink trap came off. Dirty water gushed from above, spreading out along the green tile. He pulled himself closer, strained to look inside, to find what he'd flushed away.

It was gone. Gone like it had never been there.
But it had been. He'd seen it. Held it.



Victor banged the curved sink trap against the floor, cracking
a tile down the center. He didn't care. He banged and banged
again. He was angry. Angry and tired. Tired of losing things.
Of having things taken from him.



Something slipped out the other end of the trap.



Waterlogged and soft, it flopped out onto the tile floor amid the sluice of dirty drain water. Still. No movement. No cries.

Victor threw the sink trap aside and crawled to it. He scooped it up carefully, holding it in his hands. It was cold, slimy to the touch. He waited for it to make a noise. To cry out as it had before.



It was dead flesh, nothing more. If it had ever been anything else to begin with. "I'm sorry," he said to it. It was a day for saying sorry.

A dark, textured painting of a man with a somber expression, looking down at a bloody, pink, fleshy object he is holding. The man's face is pale and shows signs of distress, with a small red mark on his forehead. The object he holds is a grotesque, fleshy mass with a large black eye and visible blood. A white text box is overlaid on the man's chest, containing the text: "And then, right there in his hands, it cried."

And then, right there in his hands, it cried.

After he'd dried it carefully with a towel, Victor emerged from the bathroom with the ball of flesh cradled in his palms. He watched it breathe in his hands, so tiny and alive.



Then he dug under the bed and found a shoebox Iris had left behind. He dumped out the shoes on the floor, found a heating blanket and laid it inside. He let the blanket get nice and warm before he laid the tiny ball in its new, heated bed.



The moment Victor let go, it began to cry again. This time it was louder, more urgent. A primal sound coming from a tiny mouth. The sound of it tugged at Victor's heart in a way he'd never felt before. He wanted only to protect this thing. It didn't matter what it was or where it had come from. Its life was in his hands. He was about to apologize when he realized it wouldn't help. No apologies would heal this.



"Please," he said, "please stop crying," but it only cried louder. He tried giving it food. He tried giving it milk. He thought about getting in his car and driving to the store for formula, but he didn't want to leave it alone, and he couldn't bring it with him, either. No one would understand.



"I don't know what you want," he said, nearly in tears himself. Was it in pain? Would he have to help the pain stop? He reached into the box, trying to tuck the blanket in better, figuring it might still be cold.



As he folded the blanket over, Victor's finger accidentally brushed against the thing's side. The moment it did, the crying stopped.



Only when he kept contact with it did it stop crying. It wouldn't take food. It wouldn't drink water. The only thing it asked for, the only thing it needed, was him.



Victor called out sick from work. He told them he was seeing someone about his cough.

The next day, everyone at work was being nicer to Victor than they had in a long time. They told him how happy they were he'd gone to see a doctor.



"You're already sounding better," they said, and he agreed. He knew the real reason they were happy. They wouldn't have to listen to him cough anymore.

Victor sat at his desk and did his work. He caught up on what he'd missed from calling out. He was anxious, though. He could barely stay seated in his chair. Co-workers passed by his desk, pausing to tell him he was looking much better. The way his shirt was fitting him, he even looked like he was losing weight. He smiled and thanked them, letting them move on and get back to work.

Finally, after about an hour, around the time he usually did, he left his desk and headed to the bathroom.

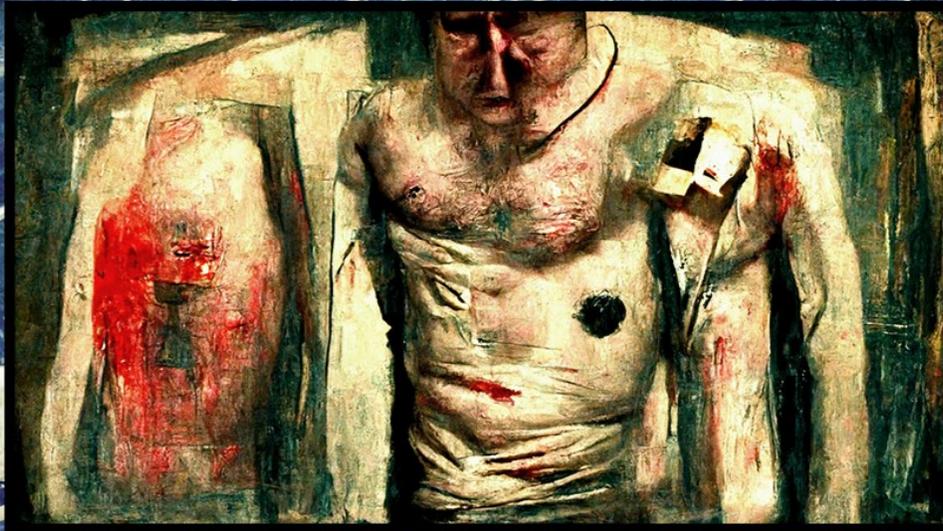
The bathrooms were private, one person at a time. Still acting casually, Victor stepped inside the men's room and locked the door behind him. He took a great big, breath, held it, then let it out. He really was doing much better. A few days earlier, taking in a breath like that would have ended quite differently.



Victor undid the buttons on his shirt and hung it carefully over the paper towel dispenser. Then he pulled his undershirt over his head and hung that up, too.



The square of gauze had held perfectly, secured firmly to the center of his chest with medical tape. He undid the top strip slowly, even though it hurt to go slow. He felt each hair ripping from his chest. He grimaced, but he didn't make a sound. No one could know what he was doing.



He knew the bandage had felt snug, tight beneath his shirt as he sat at his desk, but now he could see why. The ball of flesh was already bigger. It wasn't his imagination, it had nearly doubled in size since the beginning.

"Look at you," he whispered, huddled over the sink. It looked up at him with beautiful, black eyes. "Well, now you need a name," Victor said. He decided to call him Lungflower.



Lungflower liked his name.

Victor brought Lungflower to work like this for a few days, but very quickly Lungflower grew too big to hide. There wasn't a shirt big enough in his closet that would do the trick. Lungflower could go a few minutes away from Victor's touch without screaming like it hurt him, but it wasn't enough, and Victor didn't feel right leaving him alone.



Victor came up with a hundred ideas how to sneak Lungflower into work. They were all insane or worse. Even if he could leave Lungflower at home, he didn't trust his neighbors.

At least one of them had come snooping around the last time she heard crying, all because Victor tried to take a shower when Lungflower was asleep. He made up a story about babysitting his nephew and left before any more questions could be asked.



He had one more idea. Victor called up his boss and asked if he could work from home, for medical reasons. There was nothing he did at work he couldn't do from home. But his boss said no. Nine years of loyalty meant nothing to them.



Victor had no choice. He quit his job that day.

Lungflower had been in the world a week. He'd started the size of a plump cherry. Already he was the size of a baby.



He held Victor's finger in his gray-pink hand and smiled up at him.

The early days at home with Lungflower were nice. Victor hadn't been without a job since the sixth grade. He'd always had so little time to himself. In fact he'd never had more than a few weeks vacation, and they were usually spent sitting on a beach or visiting Iris's family.



The new bedroom made a perfect nursery, Victor had been right about that. He bought as much sound-proofing material as he could get his hands on and lined the walls.



Lungflower didn't eat, though he sometimes looked hungry. He didn't drink, though he sometimes looked thirsty. Another week passed and Lungflower grew more and more. He was taller than a toddler and nearly twice as wide.

He seemed to grow faster whenever he was hurt or scared, though that might have been Victor's imagination.



Checking that Lungflower was still asleep, Victor snuck out of the house early one morning to buy food for himself. The refrigerator was empty and so was his stomach. Before he could get into his car, he heard someone call out his name.



"Morning," Victor replied to his nosy neighbor.



"No more babysitting?" She asked him. "I haven't heard any crying lately."



Her eyes accused him. Victor didn't like that. He didn't like her. "Still babysitting," he said. "Just getting better at it."



When he came back from the store, Lungflower was awake. His screams were so loud they could be heard through the soundproofing. Victor threw the food down and ran to the nursery.



Lungflower had gotten bigger since Victor checked on him an hour earlier. Much bigger. He barely fit in his bed now, and his arms were as long as Victor's.

Victor held him and told him he was sorry, that he'd never leave him. Not ever. He'd only gone out to get food.

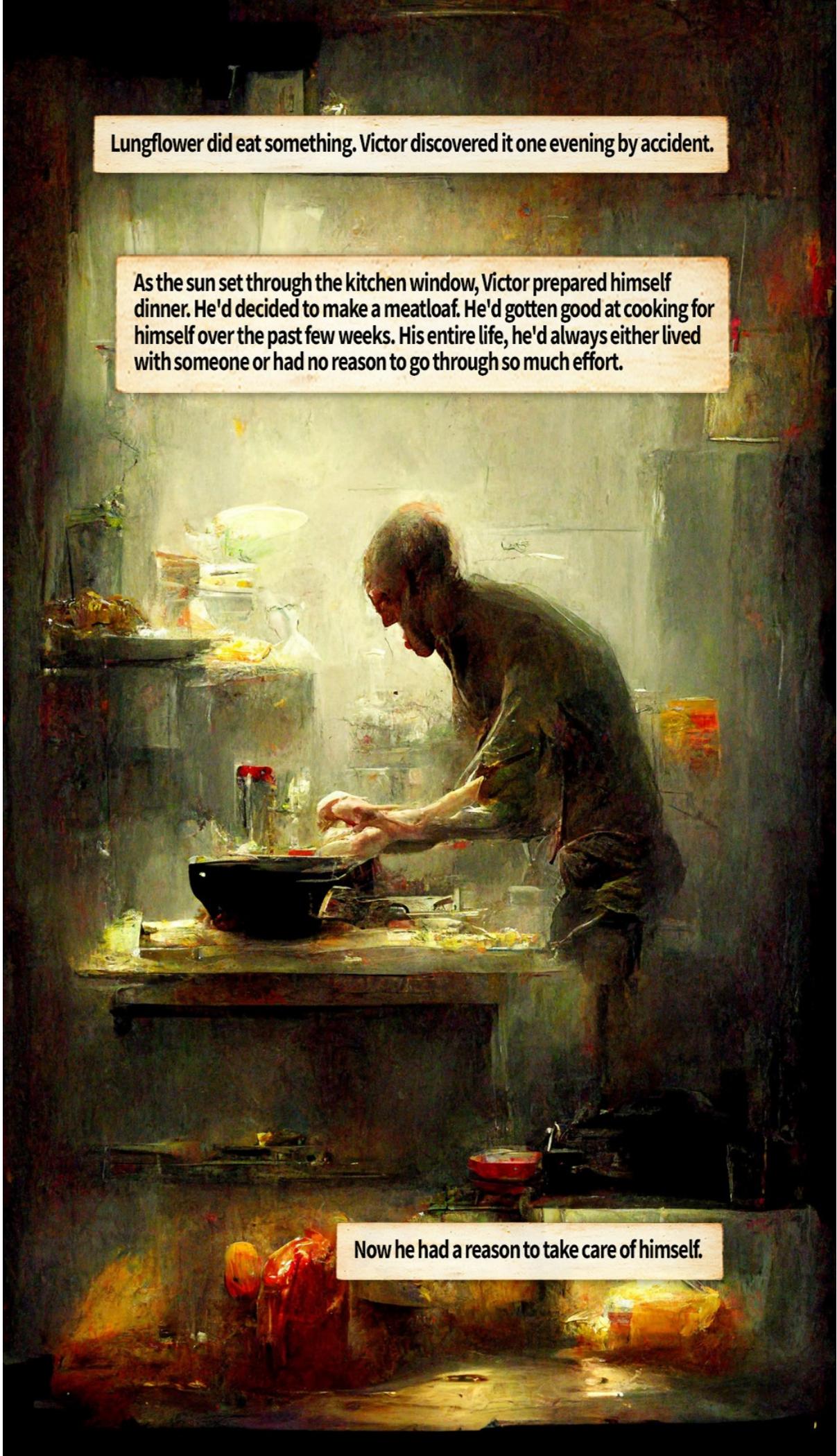


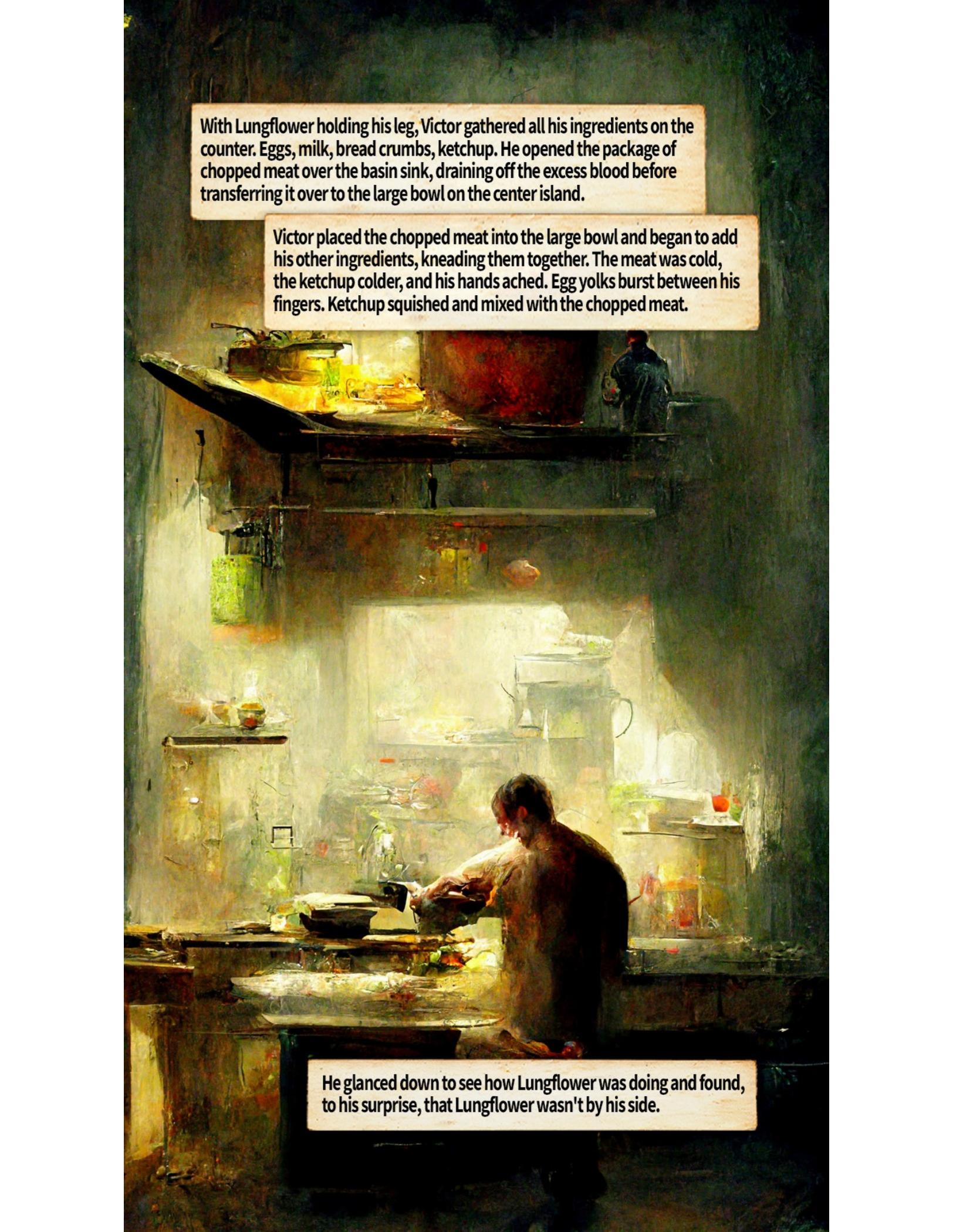
It wasn't Victor's imagination. Lungflower grew faster when he was scared. He'd grown a strange fold at the center of his chest. Like a kangaroo's pouch.

Lungflower did eat something. Victor discovered it one evening by accident.

As the sun set through the kitchen window, Victor prepared himself dinner. He'd decided to make a meatloaf. He'd gotten good at cooking for himself over the past few weeks. His entire life, he'd always either lived with someone or had no reason to go through so much effort.

Now he had a reason to take care of himself.



A painting of a kitchen scene. In the foreground, a man is seen from the back, wearing a dark shirt, leaning over a counter and cooking. The kitchen is filled with various items on shelves and counters, including a large pot on the stove and a sink. In the background, another person is visible, standing near a doorway. The lighting is warm and focused on the cooking area, creating a sense of activity and atmosphere.

With Lungflower holding his leg, Victor gathered all his ingredients on the counter. Eggs, milk, bread crumbs, ketchup. He opened the package of chopped meat over the basin sink, draining off the excess blood before transferring it over to the large bowl on the center island.

Victor placed the chopped meat into the large bowl and began to add his other ingredients, kneading them together. The meat was cold, the ketchup colder, and his hands ached. Egg yolks burst between his fingers. Ketchup squished and mixed with the chopped meat.

He glanced down to see how Lungflower was doing and found, to his surprise, that Lungflower wasn't by his side.

A moment of panic seized him. Lungflower never left his side. Never even let go of him. He prepared himself to search the house. To find something terrible. But the search didn't last long, and what he found wasn't terrible at all.



Lungflower was around the other side of the island, crouched over something he'd found. Victor hadn't noticed that when he'd transferred the meat from the sink to the island, a bit of it had slipped through his fingers and fallen to the floor.



He watched as Lungflower's pinkish-gray hand reached out and claimed it. Brought the meat to his mouth. Before he could eat it, though, Lungflower turned and looked at Victor.

"It's okay," Victor said, smiling.



Lungflower ate raw meat. Victor tried to cook it, but when he did Lungflower spit it out. He tried to season it, marinate it, give it some kind of flavor.



Lungflower wouldn't take it. Victor began to buy more meat at the store. The more Lungflower ate, the more he could be on his own for small stretches of time. It gave him strength, and courage, and Victor wanted both for him.

When he thought about it, Victor realized he hadn't seen or heard a mouse in weeks.





Lungflower grew bigger than Victor. He grew bigger every day. He didn't speak, never tried to, but there was an intelligence behind his eyes that couldn't be ignored. And pain. Soon Lungflower barely fit under the doorways. Then he was hitting his head on the ceiling.





Victor bought more and more meat at the store. Whenever people started looking at him odd, he just went to a different store.



One night, well after he'd said goodnight to Lungflower in the living room, the only room Lungflower fit in anymore, and long after he'd drifted off to sleep, Victor woke up to the awful sound of Lungflower screaming.



He jumped from his bed and ran to check on him, to see what was causing him to make that terrible sound. His socks slipped on the worn-down wooden floor. He nearly knocked down a vase. When he reached the living room, he gasped at what he found.





Lungflower took up the entire living room. His thick neck was bent, head craned sideways against the ceiling.

His black eyes looked at Victor, filled with so much pain. His massive legs were twisted like vines just to fit.



Victor had been worried about this moment. He'd been trying not to think of it, but it had arrived all the same. Lungflower simply couldn't fit in the house anymore. Not long ago, Lungflower couldn't stand to be apart from Victor. He'd cry if they weren't in contact. Flesh to flesh.

Now it was Victor who was holding on. But doing so wasn't helping Lungflower. It was hurting him.



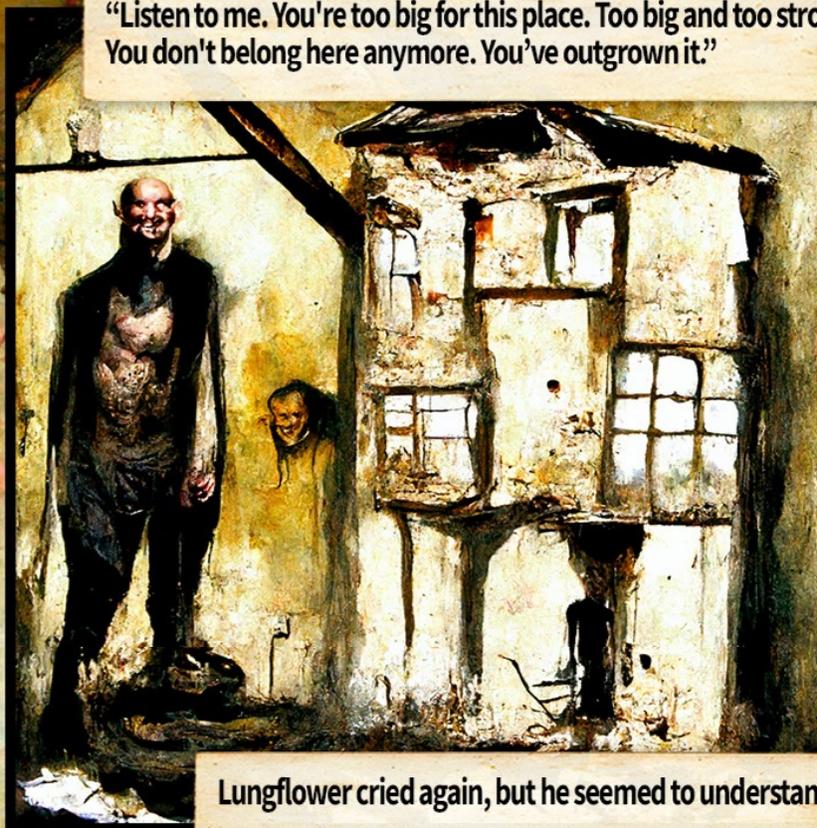
Stepping around the broken couch, Victor walked between Lungflower's tree-like legs. He went to Lungflower and laid his hand on his massive hand. The hand that had wrapped around Victor's finger once. Now each finger was as large as Victor's body.

"It's okay if you have to go," Victor said.



Lungflower's pupils searched Victor. He cried out, the saddest sound Victor had ever heard. Lungflower sounded hungry, Hungry and scared.

"Listen to me. You're too big for this place. Too big and too strong. You don't belong here anymore. You've outgrown it."



Lungflower cried again, but he seemed to understand.

He began to spread his arms and legs first. The walls moaned and cracked like old bones.



Plaster cracked and wallpaper tore. A split opened in the ceiling, a lightning bolt of splinters. Dust fell like snow.

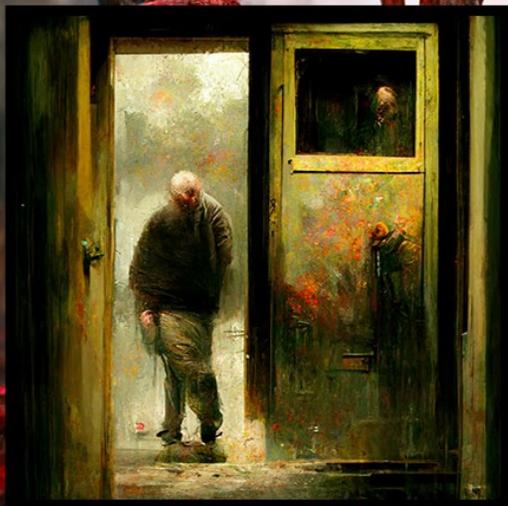


With enough room to breathe, Lungflower placed his gray-pink hands on the floor. His massive shoulders flexed and spread. It was better, but not enough. He looked once more at Victor.

Victor nodded.



He went out the front door, walking backward all the way to the front yard. He watched as the house buckled and shook. Windows shattered outward. Shingles rained down on dead grass.





The roof opened like an egg hatching in the night. Like a flower in bloom, the house opened in front of Victor. The thing he had put all of his money into, all his time and passion.

Lungflower emerged from the remains of the crumbling house, born new into the night. Arms like redwoods stretched free. Black, wondrous eyes drank in the dark sky. It was a beautiful sight. The most beautiful Victor had ever seen.

He heard a voice intruding on the moment. His nosy neighbor was standing in her open doorway, dressed in a robe. In her hand was a phone. On her lips was panic. She was talking to the police, telling them to hurry, that something terrible was happening and that a man named Victor was to blame.

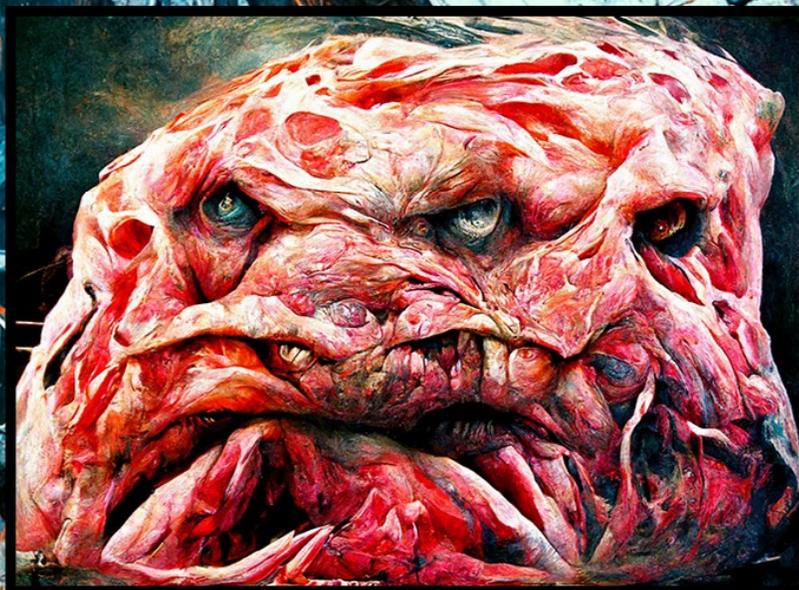


"It's not terrible," Victor called out to her as Lungflower slipped free of his prison.



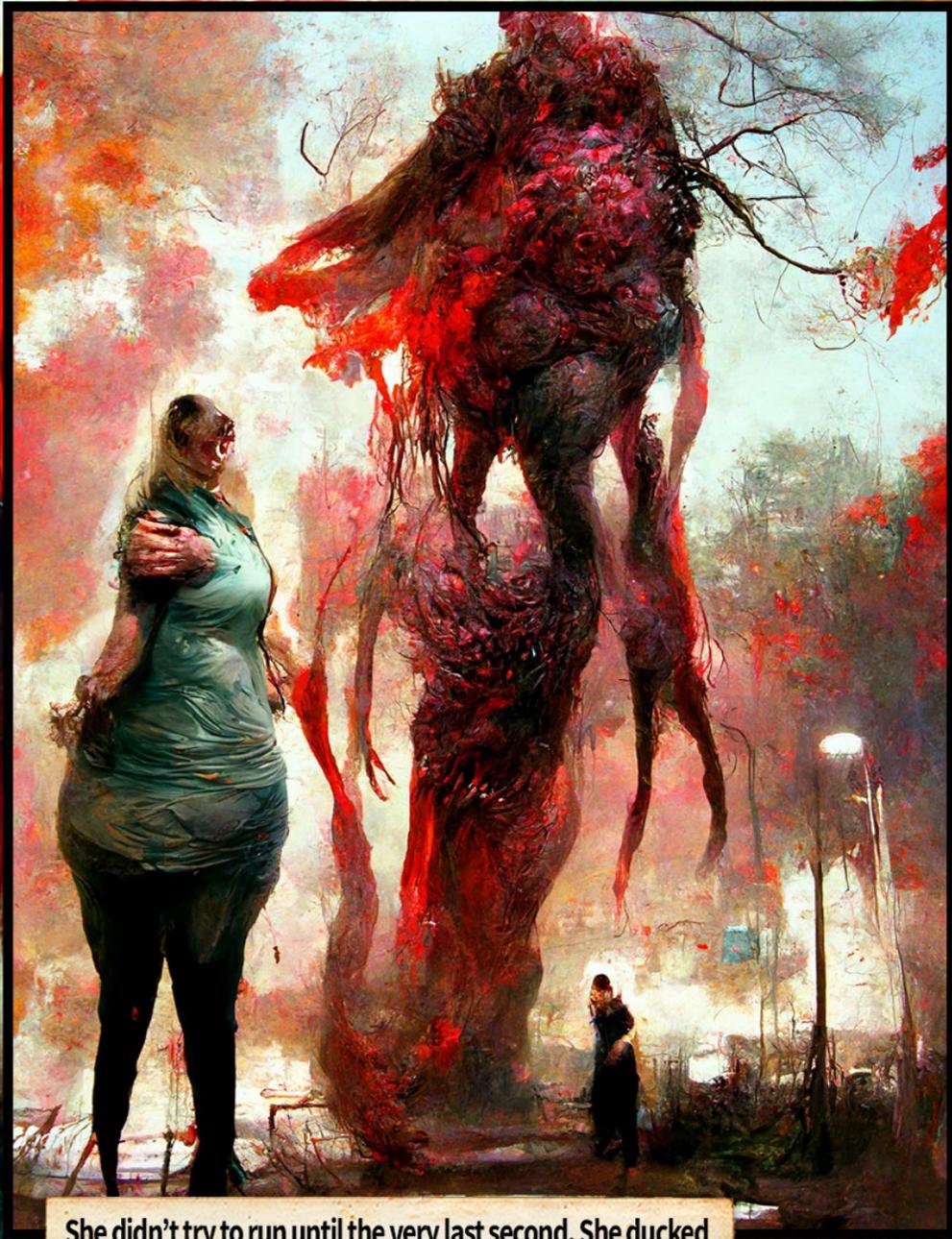
"You stay away from me!" She screamed back.
"You and whatever that thing is! I mean it!"

Lungflower didn't like that. He didn't like people yelling at Victor. The folds of his face shifted a way Victor had never seen them before. He'd seen Lungflower happy. He'd seen him scared and hungry, confused and content and even silly.



Victor had never seen him angry.

In three, massive strides, Lungflower went for the woman. With each step, Victor swore Lungflower grew another ten feet. The woman was frozen by the sight of it.



She didn't try to run until the very last second. She ducked inside her house and slammed the door.



Lungflower turned to Victor, asking permission. Victor had watched from his cracked driveway. He was amazed to see Lungflower out in the world.

When he shook his head, Lungflower reached out and grabbed Victor up from where he stood.



Lungflower could crush him like a cherry, a cherry with bones, but Victor wasn't afraid. He didn't fear dying, and he didn't have to. He knew Lungflower wouldn't hurt him. Lungflower might have grown a lot in the past few weeks, but he was still exactly the same.



"You're doing so well," Victor told him. The vibrations of Lungflower's purring shook him. It felt good, like one of those massage chairs at the mall.



It wasn't long before the police showed up. Lungflower was scared of all the cars at his feet, their flashing lights and sirens.



Victor told him to stay calm. The two of them ignored the noise and the lights for a while, ignored the men trying to speak to them through bullhorns.



Victor pointed out all the new sights and told Lungflower what they were called. Lungflower liked the telephone wires best.

**“Stay calm, Victor,” one of the police said through his bullhorn.
“We called your wife. She’s on her way.”**



“I don’t have a wife,” Victor replied. He glanced at the house they’d once shared. It was nothing more than a pile of sticks and moldy insulation. A cheap gazebo in the backyard. Maybe that was all it had ever been.



Victor looked up at Lungflower, the way Lungflower had once looked up at him. "There's nothing here for us," he said.



Lungflower's black eyes understood. He slipped Victor into the fold in his chest. Like a kangaroo's pouch.



Then he ran, leaving the shouting police and the pile of sticks behind.

Lungflower's footsteps shook the earth. The streets trembled and cracked under his feet. People screamed and cried and prayed and took their pictures.



And all the while, Lungflower grew bigger.



Victor watched from the warmth of Lungflower's chest as houses fell. He smiled as office buildings broke and electrical boxes exploded. Power lines and telephone wires- Lungflower's favorite- snapped under his feet like overused fishing line.



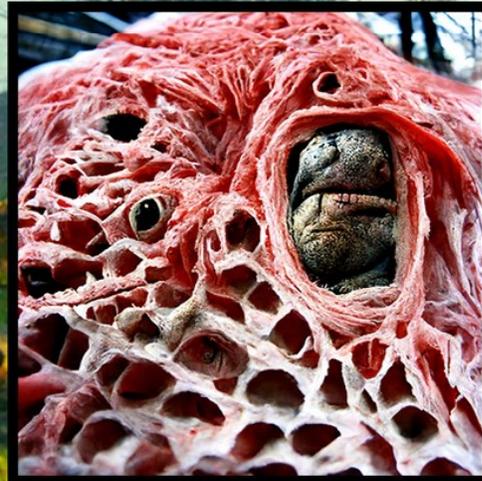
And still he grew bigger.

And bigger.

Because even though he was massive, even though things crumbled and burned with each move he made, he still felt everything.

Everything he broke hurt him, too. Everything he ruined, ruined him back.

Soon the men with guns came. They fired at Lungflower, scaring him, leaving black marks across his skin. But no matter how much they threw at him, how many bullets they fired and explosives they launched, Lungflower didn't fight back. He only protected Victor. Shielded him from the pain.



Bigger and bigger Lungflower grew. Bigger and bigger the guns came. As fire lit up the sky, reflecting like bright orange petals in Lungflower's eyes, Victor realized a terrible truth: Lungflower had one downfall, one weakness in this world.

A dark, atmospheric painting. In the center, a man with a balding head and a dark, heavy coat is looking down at a pig-like creature he is holding. The creature has a large, dark eye and a pinkish, fleshy appearance. The background is a dark, textured space with scattered red and white specks, suggesting a desolate or hazardous environment. There are some skeletal or root-like structures hanging from the top. Three text boxes are overlaid on the image: one at the top left, one at the bottom left, and two at the bottom right.

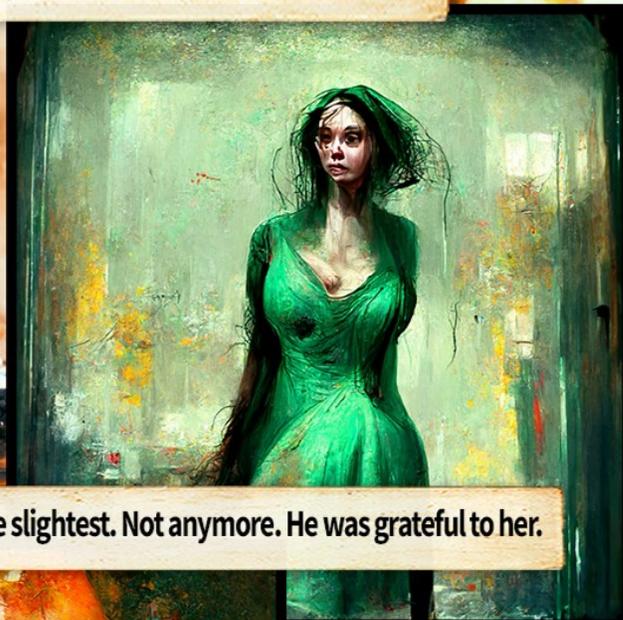
Him.

Victor had been all that Lungflower had needed in the beginning,
but now, out in the world, Victor was holding him back.

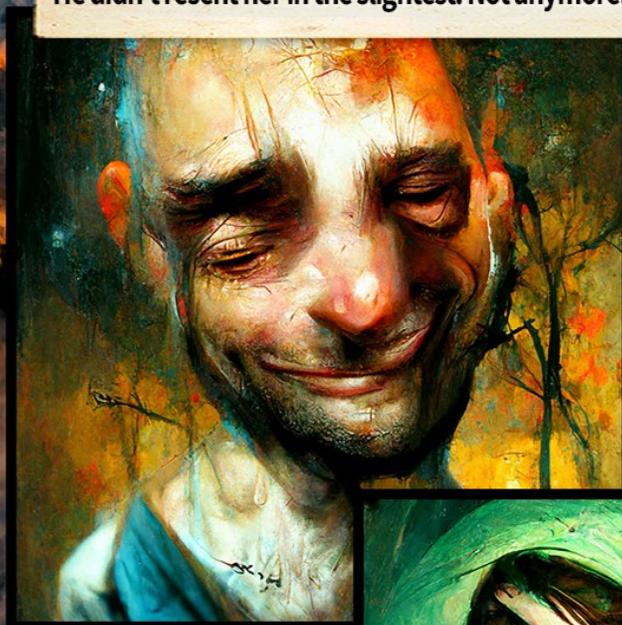
A crutch.

A heated blanket.

Down in the crowd of flashing lights and violent men far below, behind the orange and white barricades, Victor saw a face he'd known in another life. They'd shared a house once. A future.



He didn't resent her in the slightest. Not anymore. He was grateful to her.



He was happy she was here to see this.

Without hesitation, Victor jumped.



He fell like a raindrop.



Down.



Down.



Down Lungflower's incredible height.



Soft wind in his hair.



His clothes flapping like a flag.

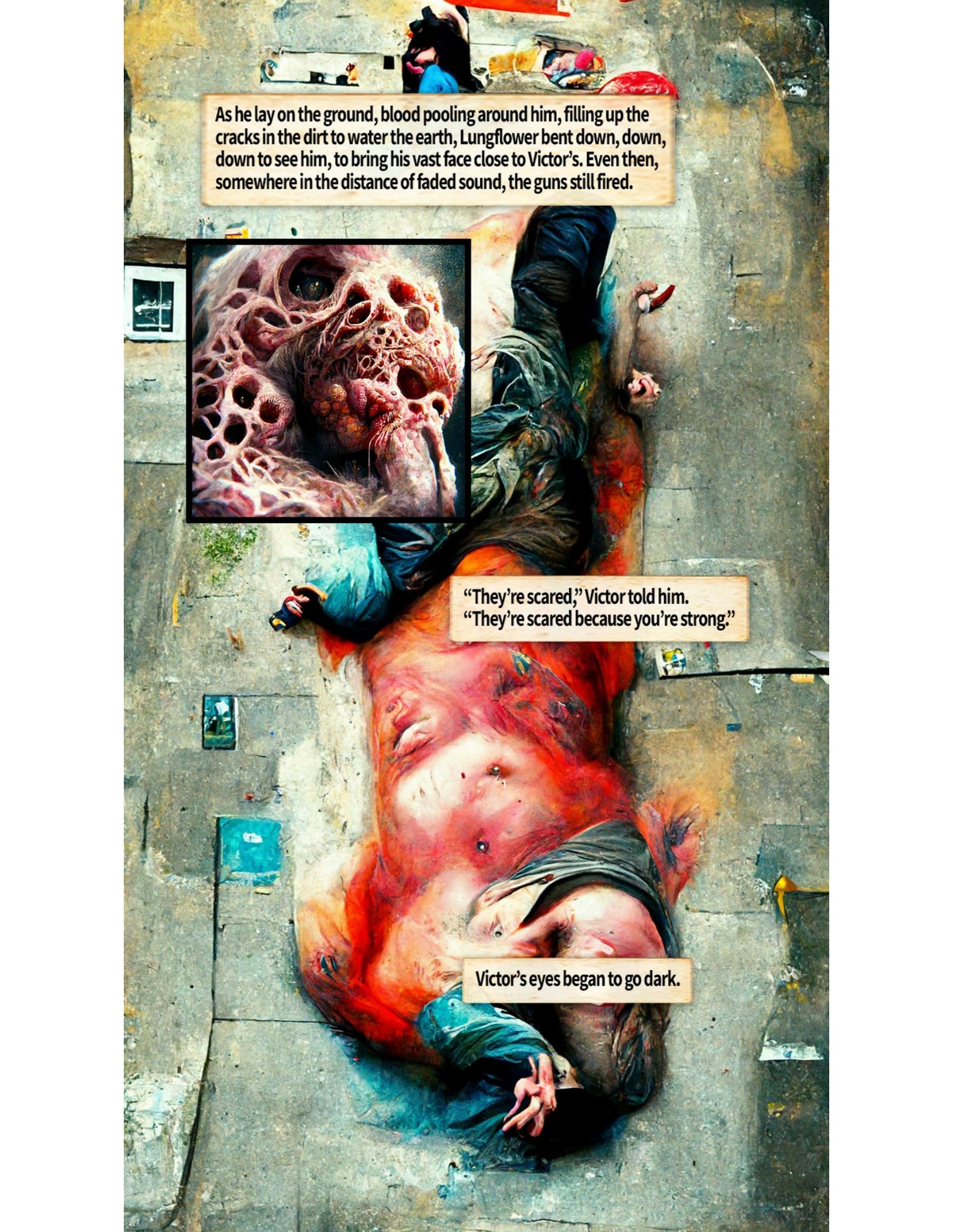


All the way down, his eyes filled up with tears as he beheld how big Lungflower had grown.



He was so happy, he barely felt the impact.





As he lay on the ground, blood pooling around him, filling up the cracks in the dirt to water the earth, Lungflower bent down, down, down to see him, to bring his vast face close to Victor's. Even then, somewhere in the distance of faded sound, the guns still fired.



"They're scared," Victor told him.
"They're scared because you're strong."

Victor's eyes began to go dark.

Shadows closed in like a warm blanket. He looked into Lungflower's eye, at the sadness there. The pain. But even then he knew what else was behind it.



"Are you hungry?" He asked.



Lungflower simply nodded. Victor smiled up at him, the way Lungflower had once smiled up at Victor.

"It's okay, son," he said. "It's okay."

The word was all he needed. Lungflower rose. He turned to the people firing at him, turned to consume them all. His capacity to love was endless, but all those people would never know that.



They would only know his other, unending side.



His hunger.



As Victor's eyes went black, he felt his chest swell with pride. Pride, and something else.



A detailed painting of a creature whose body is composed of various flowers and plants. The creature's head is the most prominent, featuring large, dark, textured eyes and a mouth that appears to be a cluster of small, dark flowers. Its body is a complex arrangement of pink, red, and yellow flowers, with green stems and leaves visible. The background is a soft, textured wash of teal and green, suggesting a natural, outdoor setting. The overall style is highly detailed and expressive, with visible brushstrokes and a rich color palette.

When Lungflower had grown in his lungs, back in what felt like a lifetime ago, Victor had developed a cough. A nagging, painful cough, like thistles deep down.

But Victor understood it now. The coughing wasn't because he was sick, it was because he'd tried to keep it in. To deny what was happening. To hold back the beauty of the change.

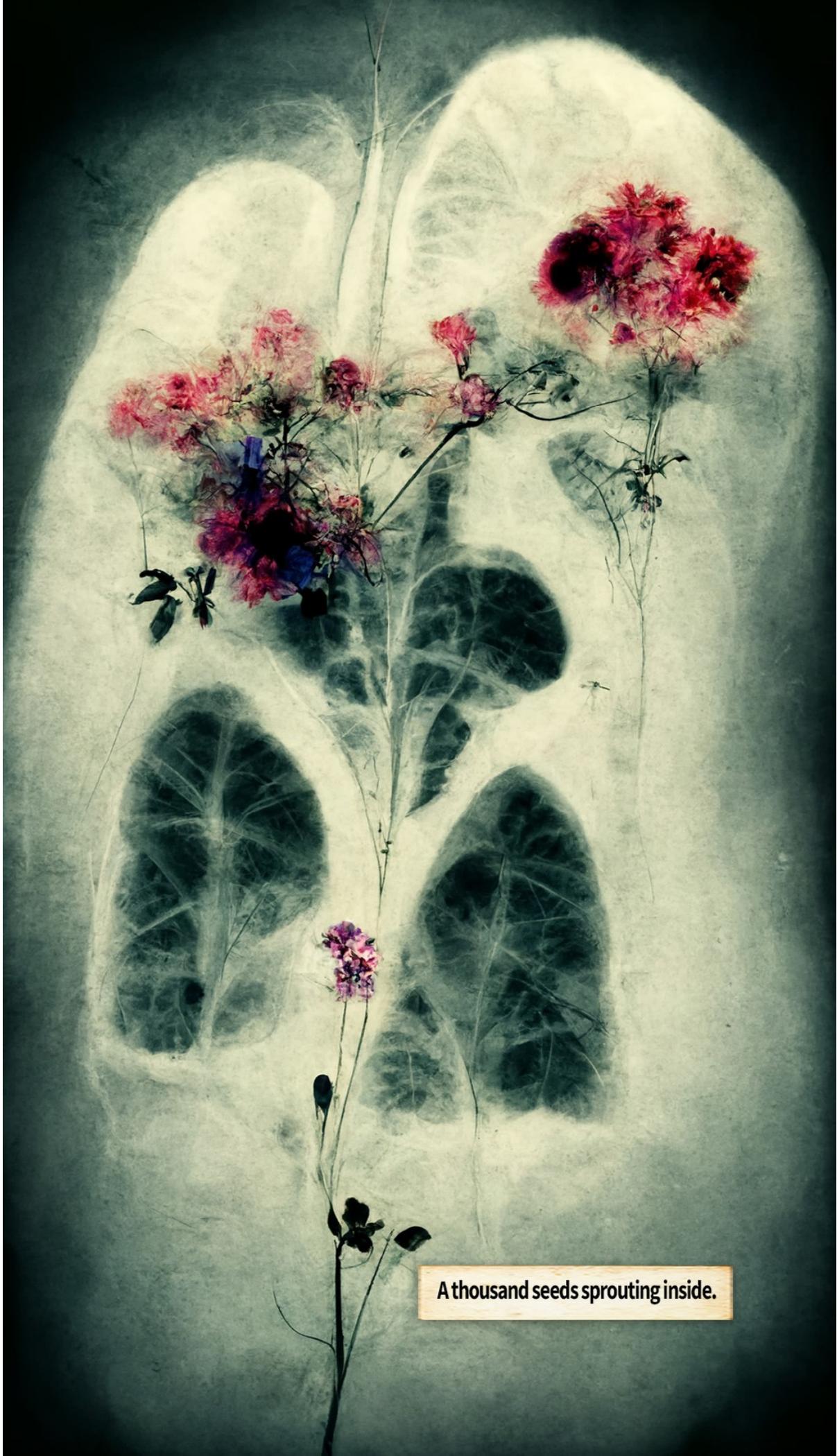
This time he'd denied nothing. Held back nothing.



This time he'd been ready for the beauty. Ready for the transformation.

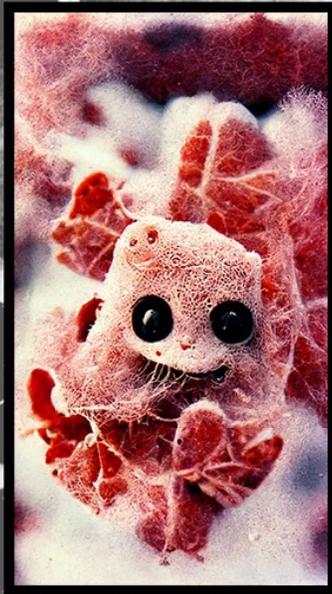
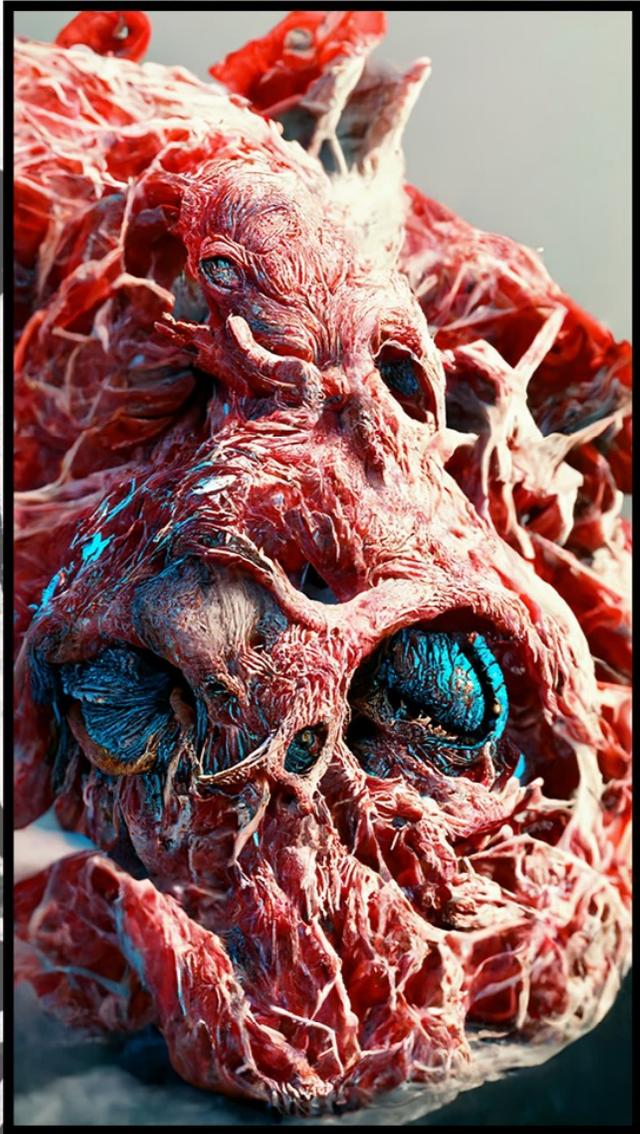


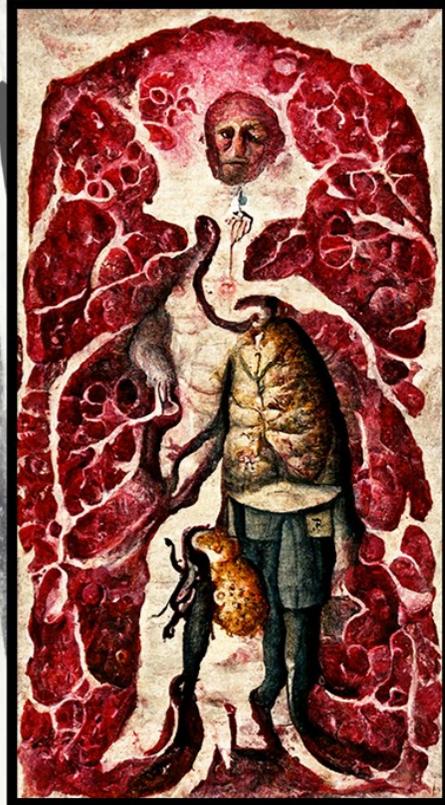
The truth was, Victor had felt it for days.



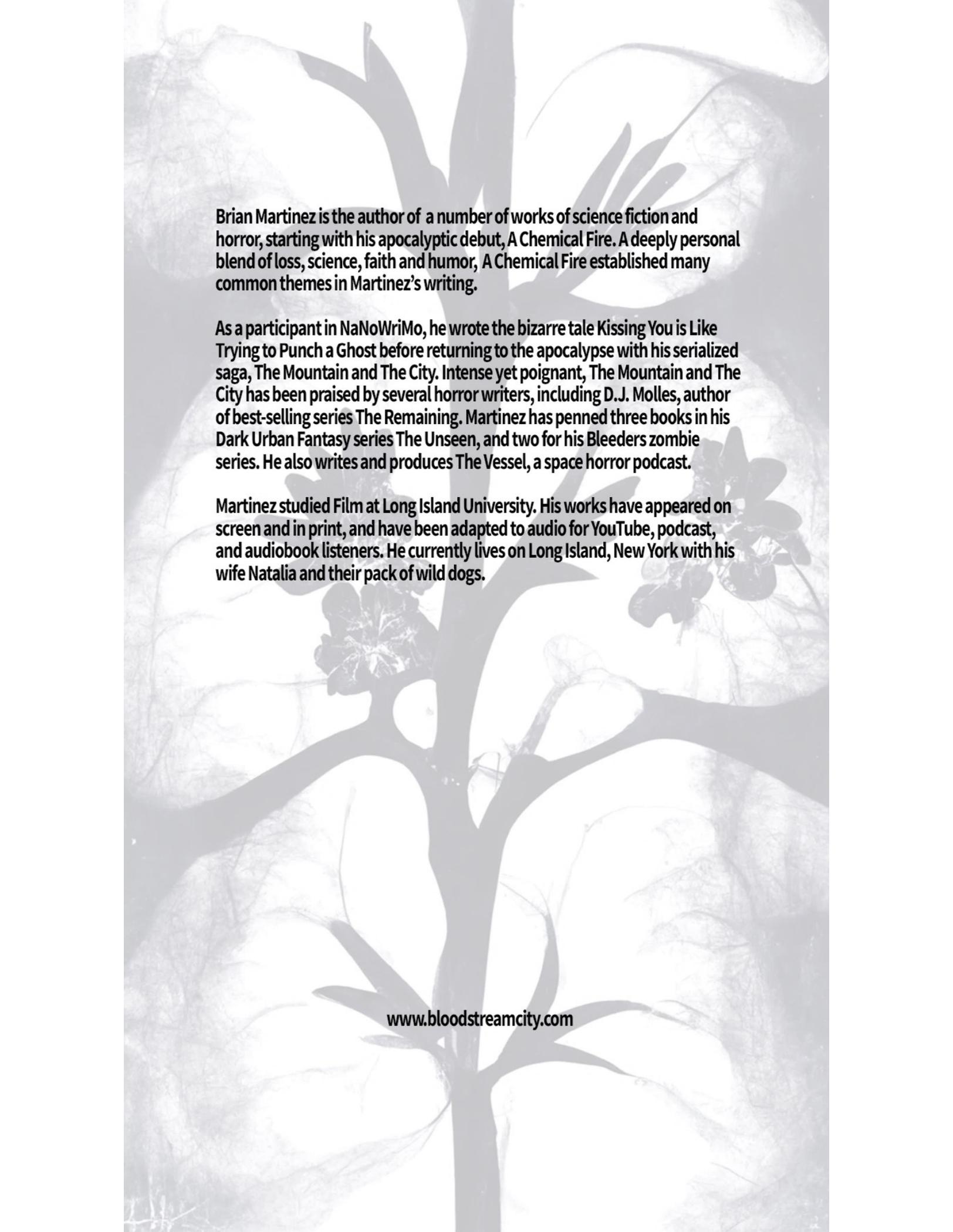
A thousand seeds sprouting inside.

Gallery







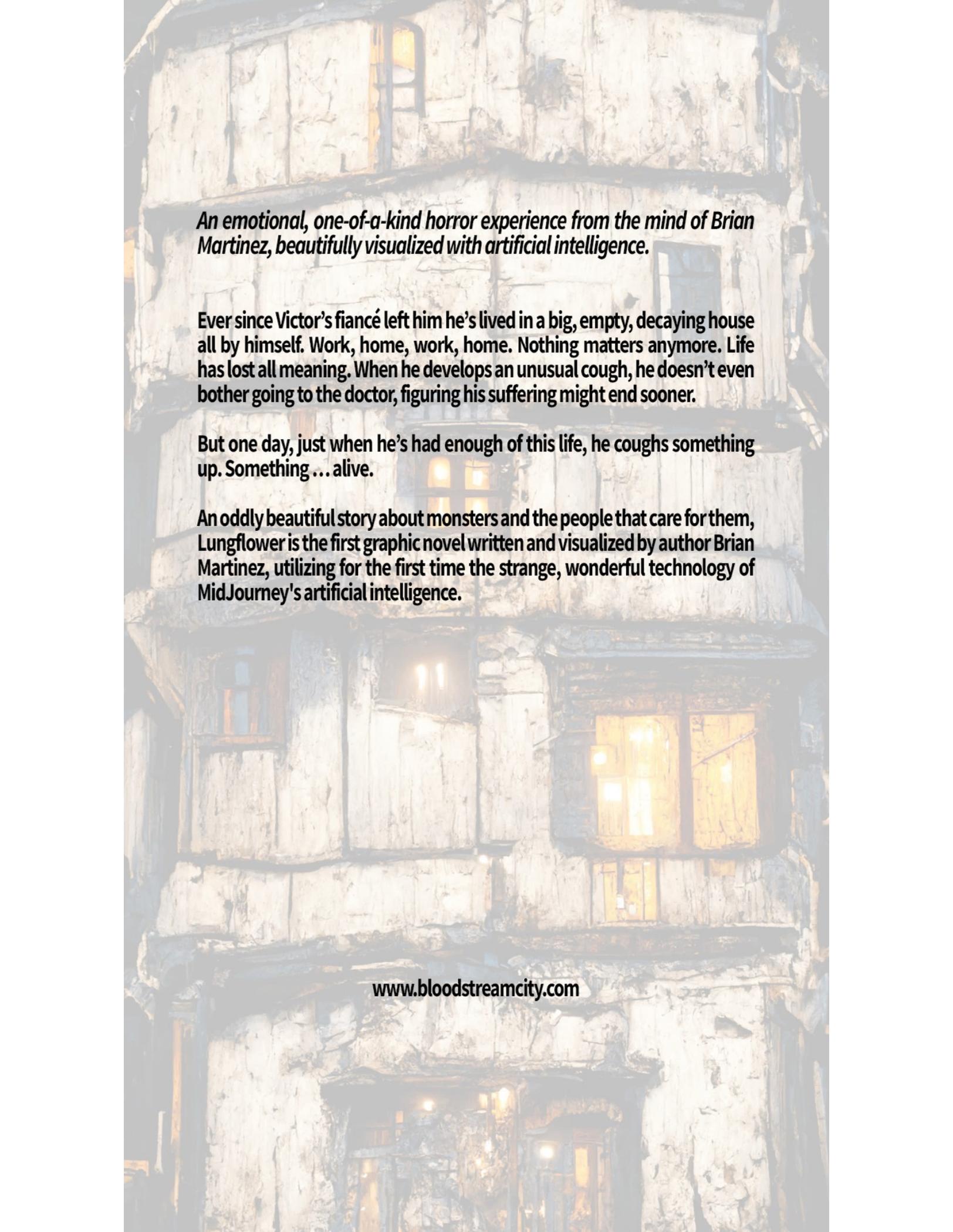


Brian Martinez is the author of a number of works of science fiction and horror, starting with his apocalyptic debut, *A Chemical Fire*. A deeply personal blend of loss, science, faith and humor, *A Chemical Fire* established many common themes in Martinez's writing.

As a participant in NaNoWriMo, he wrote the bizarre tale *Kissing You is Like Trying to Punch a Ghost* before returning to the apocalypse with his serialized saga, *The Mountain and The City*. Intense yet poignant, *The Mountain and The City* has been praised by several horror writers, including D.J. Molles, author of best-selling series *The Remaining*. Martinez has penned three books in his *Dark Urban Fantasy* series *The Unseen*, and two for his *Bleeders* zombie series. He also writes and produces *The Vessel*, a space horror podcast.

Martinez studied Film at Long Island University. His works have appeared on screen and in print, and have been adapted to audio for YouTube, podcast, and audiobook listeners. He currently lives on Long Island, New York with his wife Natalia and their pack of wild dogs.

www.bloodstreamcity.com



An emotional, one-of-a-kind horror experience from the mind of Brian Martinez, beautifully visualized with artificial intelligence.

Ever since Victor's fiancé left him he's lived in a big, empty, decaying house all by himself. Work, home, work, home. Nothing matters anymore. Life has lost all meaning. When he develops an unusual cough, he doesn't even bother going to the doctor, figuring his suffering might end sooner.

But one day, just when he's had enough of this life, he coughs something up. Something ... alive.

An oddly beautiful story about monsters and the people that care for them, Lungflower is the first graphic novel written and visualized by author Brian Martinez, utilizing for the first time the strange, wonderful technology of MidJourney's artificial intelligence.

www.bloodstreamcity.com