

## "Redemption"

As I sit here at the finish line, finally victorious, I can't help but reflect on how long it's taken me to get here. Join me as I take you on a ride through a mind that was as twisted as intertwined roots.

Heading nowhere fast, I cruised the desolate roads with no particular purpose or destination. Very rarely did I slow down to peruse the beauty of my surroundings. Only two things held my focus: Being fast and furious. Life passed me by like oncoming traffic on the autobahn.

Heading nowhere, I rolled with a squad out of some twisted sense of obligation. We were the original "Walking Dead," mindless automatons hell bent on causing destruction and chaos to feed our own selfish desires. I promised my undying loyalty till the end. But my end came quicker than most, so when it was time to part ways, saying goodbye wasn't as easy as anticipated.

For the first time in my pathetic existence, I finally felt a beat in my heart. From that point on I became an adrenaline junkie. Seeking out any and everything to get a rush. Doing 80 down the roads, 100 on the freeway, what do I care if it's raining, it's my last chance of catching that big Kahuna. I guess I'm a concrete surfer. Who knew?

Then one day it all went to shit. I met an old, solitary witch that did a tarot reading for me. I pulled the 2 of Swords, Death, and the Tower. She told me that my life was at a stalemate because my beliefs were based on false foundations, and that a major transformation was ahead. I bolted as fast and as far as I could from that creepy old woman with the emerald-green eyes, never looking back.

Faster and faster I drove, trying to get her outta my head. But she still haunted me. Those eyes. In fact, I saw those green eyes floating in the fog-filled night and swerved to avoid them. It was then I realized I made a wrong turn, but it was too late to hit the breaks. The car barreled off the cliff and splashed into the icy lake below. It sank inch by inch. This was one adrenaline rush I could've done without.

Sitting in my sinking tomb, I can't help but finally admire the ambience, the beauty of the dancing shadows around me. Sounds weigh heavily on my ears as my cocoon begins feeling more like a sensory deprivation chamber. The water continues rising inside.

Hands reach out to me but I refuse to embrace them. Death is a tricky little shit.

I hold on a little longer. The water continues rising.

I wonder what my mom's doing right now? What about

My daughters? If I ever get out of this chamber, I'm gonna do like that one guy -- I think his name was Earl -- and make amends for all the pain I've caused. Hall! Wishful thinking from a man who's seconds from death. Maybe I'll --

What the hell keeps knocking on the windows deep down here? I turn and see more reaching hands. Only, they're not as creepy this time. They extend to people with sincere concern in their eyes. Some even smile now that they've got my attention. Their hands and faces are all I see in this jet-black abyss.

With my last few breaths, I roll down the window and allow them to save me from myself. They pull me ashore and I finally see how many people were involved in my rescue. No police. No firemen. All were volunteers. As I sat there on the jagged rocks lining the lake, someone told me I was being given a "Chance for Life." I was taught how to creatively write by Ms. Bora. I even spent "One Day with God" along with my princesses.

So now I sit at the finish line, having endured a metamorphosis into a man from the "grown child" I once was. And thanks to all these volunteers, my final destination is success.

By: Rio

