

# **Dreaming of Fish**

## **& Other Apocalyptic Stories Of Foreboding and Grace**

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## Short Descriptions of Stories

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1. **“Dreaming of Fish”**— Mr. Reid has a terminal tumor in his occipital lobe, so he decides to take a last solitary camping trip into Idaho’s Boulder White Cloud mountains where he and his wife, Penny, spent years of wonderful companionship and love. His first night there he dreams that he is a fish spawning a mystical world. The next morning while fishing in a high mountain stream, he slips, falls in, and drowns. His fishing rod and reel fallen into the stream become a metaphor for the small world in which we, while captive as it were, struggle to be free. Based on one of the author’s dreams, this story is in the voice of the 2<sup>nd</sup> person narrator.
2. **“When They Come”**— A modern-day fable in which Jesse Alvarez takes the restaurant garbage out to the cans in back and disturbs a virtuous and upright colony of cockroaches there. Come up from Mexico to make a living and help his family south of the border, he has found his way to the sanctuary city, Portland, Oregon, and he struggles in obscurity until the cockroaches come for him.
3. **“Mirror Mirror”**— Renner Cheval looks at his world reflected back from his blue mirror. His work at a picture framing shop provides him the opportunity to meet a beautiful and attractive customer, Elle, whom he meets via his mirror. As he is framing her painting, he mutilates the canvas and enters the numinous beauty of her reality. He has a life-changing revelation when she arrives to pick up her picture. 2<sup>nd</sup> person narrator.
4. **“Inside Out”**— On the way to work in the early morning, a nameless driver (“You”) passes over a railroad track in a low dry stream basin. He senses the many peoples and individuals who have passed through and paused there. He also feels the human consequences of a traffic accident in which Ellen Nella on a lunch time pizza errand is killed by an errant golf ball hit by the County coroner, Alan Nala. The driver senses the elements of Ellen’s spirit and body diffuse and then settle against the phosphorescent and darkened edge of the early morning world. 2<sup>nd</sup> person narrator.
5. **“Stepping Stone”**— A San Francisco widower misses his loving wife, Bets, and after she counsels him in a dream to get out and live again, he visits the Japanese Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park. He inadvertently bumps into a beautiful young girl while crossing a small stream in the park, and the poignancy of old age and the need to love and be loved is clarified in the stark light of the icy water. 2<sup>nd</sup> person narrator.

6. **“In Its Luster”**— Bayard is a sensitive school boy who conceives powers from his innate ability to sense everything connected. At the same time that his father forsakes the family, he meets a school mate, Mercedes, a flamenco aficionada, and they recognize their love for each other. The beauty of the synchronous human experience is accentuated by a young Iraqi astrophysicist, a Greek monk who makes bread, a guitarist tuning his guitar, a pair of country dancers, an Indian cook, and a long time loving husband and wife.
7. **“Fallen In”**— A brooding rumination about the nature of men and men’s friendships. Across the table over lunch and drinks at a riverside bar, Charlie and bitch drama queen, Savannah, exchange verbal repartee regarding gay and straight men, and he describes his loving relationships with his two departed best friends. As he leaves the restaurant with his wife, he recognizes the lamentable state of the many men in the restaurant. Later as Charlie researches an assortment of good and bad men from history, he proclaims the anguish of his vigil for men’s friendships. 2nd person narrator.
8. **“Like A Butterfly”**— Hightower and High Rise Associates CEO Crenshaw Hightower collapses during a Singapore board meeting when he learns that he does indeed have ALS. As the board members struggle to help him, the unconscious CEO is travelling out of body over the African savannah where he witnesses elephant matriarchs and their families, pods of singing blue whales in the North Pacific, and finally ancient redwoods along the California coast so that Crenshaw feels a mystical union with all of life. Crenshaw awakens in a hospital bed and experiences his business reality disappear mysteriously inside what he thinks is his mind.
9. **“Nolo Contendere”**— A literary examination of an adolescent male serial killer. All creatures emerged from the Earth including teenager, Nolon Stoots. His birth is difficult, his childhood is bereft of love and respect, and he grows up familiar with guns and hunting. He is waiting on the morning sidewalk armed and ready, he thinks, to shoot someone. He begins to kill everyone in sight until his shotgun is out of shells, and it surprises him when he angrily takes his own life with his own .38 Special.
10. **“The Guardians”**— An apocalyptic story through the eyes of Ashish, the narrator, and his beloved Karishma. They have discovered and are searching out what they call “accumulations,” the dregs and fragments of civilization, and are in the process of informing the international governing body, The Guardians, of the danger to the world. Karishma and Ashish discover a crime scene near the Stanford Linear Accelerator where she feels the victim’s fate and suffering. Karishma dies suddenly, and Ashish is left to keep her powerful secret and later

to light her funeral pyre in India where her immolation portends calamity for the Earth.

11. **“Gathering Algorithms”**— A 2<sup>nd</sup> apocalyptic story about the algorithms of AI crossing the previously inviolate membrane between the digital world and natural world where the out of control algorithms have corrupted the genetic code of trees. The roots of California coastal redwoods, then Bristlecone Pines, then all across the world’s forests, mutated roots invade and destroy the civilizations that have created monstrous and disastrous tipping points that threaten humanity’s existence. Forests everywhere convulse and metamorphose while peoples around the world react with fearful and futile knee-jerk reactions. The enormous and all-encompassing tree roots finally fill the world’s seas, and the Earth enters its next dark night.
12. **“Which Was Once”**— A 3<sup>rd</sup> apocalyptic story of mathematicians, broadcasters, politicians, educators, religionists, global heads of state, and normal people dealing with the inevitable step-by-step deterioration and destruction of the earth. The process advances from the scientific bulwark of mathematics to the dissolution of all subatomic particles. Not a morbid story, but a dispassionate tale of how the world could end from an undisclosed natural contagion or human miscalculation.
13. **“Scree”**— Successful Greek architect, builder, and hunchback, Lithos Cremulon, has a recurring dream that he is a tiny crustacean scuttling over a hellish volcanic world. He consults his long-time counselor, Psychosemantia, a spiritually skilled hermaphrodite, who suggests that he visit the favorite beach of his childhood on Amorgos, one of the many beautiful Cyclades Islands in the Aegean Sea. He leaves the security of his 144<sup>th</sup> floor Dubai penthouse and his affectionate Burmese cat, Hypotenuse, to find the source of his nightmare. He meets Mercedes, a beautifully welcoming widow, who feeds Cremulon a rich and different kind of love and points him to the remote Panagia Hozoviotissa Monastery where Father Epimenides gives him a simple gift in which Cremulon discovers the source of his own healing. He relinquishes his hold as CEO of Magos Four Squared to return to Amorgos and Mercedes’ vigil.
14. **“Walleye”**— Idaho social worker, Constance Mein, tries to deliver a complaint from Cornelius Snel’s neighbor about the mess in his yard, but she finds instead that the goats in his yard are the pitiable walleyed man’s solution to his family members’ demise. The 1930s dust bowl is the tacit backdrop for Snel’s horrible eyes and the emptiness of the family’s sinister disappearance.
15. **“Tansuman”**— The spirit of Tansuman, a Sumatran boar matriarch, is transmigrated into a small baby girl, Munam, born to the old couple, Uma and

Numan, who live close to the ancient Buddhist temples of Candi Muaro Jamb in the verdant jungle of palm, bamboo, galangal, lemon grass, chiles, turmeric, and flowers. The boars live in a fragile peace regularly interrupted by hunters and loggers, and after Tansuman is shot and the sounder flees, her sister returns to the body, and there she senses a silent call to lead the sounder to where the people live. The neighbors arrive to celebrate the birth with drum, gong, and *sheng* music, the old father is dancing, and when a thunderstorm arrives overhead from the other side of the island, the humans and pigs witness the invisible transmigration of spirit from one being to another.