A Myth Told in Three Parts

1. Now.

She is alone when he finds her at the top of the First hour. He cannot understand what he sees. Abstract ruminations take his thoughts and arrest him. He eventually forces himself to canvass her, but only finds exactly what he is afraid of. Her beauty is unscathed, and he thinks he may be able to wake her. He cannot.

She is too young to die, he thinks. He cannot help but fixate on apparently outdated notions about death being for the old. He believes she is murdered, though if only because her demise grossly violates the natural laws of his life up to this point. The girl still lies underneath blankets with closed eyes. He loves her more for his loss. Tears are held by hate and hope. He means to revive her. He means to drag her back from wherever she has been taken. He does not stop to think how, only that he will.

He leaves the room every bit as white and empty as the girl inside. He struggles to maintain his composure as he contemplates his next move. Justice? Revenge? Is there anyone to blame? Maybe it’s his fault. Maybe he should follow her. Maybe he should chase her down and let her know he didn’t want this to happen, and that he was sorry. Maybe.

The thought falls from him as he sets foot outside. The sun’s absolving light grips him and holds him. He despises it for a moment. Does it know no respect? She lies dead, and yet the sun overshadows the darkness of grief with the levity of beauty. A dark day would do much better to absorb his tears. So he does not cry still. He can’t, it just does not feel right to cry as the sun still shines white light.

He walks, damning the sun, damning himself, damning all but her. He’d rather damn all to assure her death avenged than risk missing the culprit. He steps beneath the shade of a broad, ancient tree and sits. The shadow comforts him a little. Even as the rest of the world shines with angelic sun or divine moon, he can fill this basin with the gloom that mourning demands. He still does not cry.

Life grows and progresses outside his umbra. Changes. Stagnation’s stink chokes him. He breathes it deeply. It smells of bloody surrender.
A noise grips his attention. A low cough echoes from the other side of the tree, likely inaudible in the light. It sounds almost like a chuckle. He stands silently, and walks around his guardian to find a small, Stygian, man. The man approaches him with jerky, animated motions.

“Lose a lover? Kill a friend?” the Coyote Man says.

He nods. He asks the Coyote Man who he is.

“A shriver and a sinner,” the Coyote Man answers. The Coyote Man cackles at his confusion and annoyance.

He asks the Coyote Man to avoid riddles. He claims riddles are only used by those too insecure or unwise to express their meanings outright. The Coyote Man smiles.

“But your world is riddles. Why did your lover die? I don't believe you killed her, yet you blame yourself for her death. I speak riddles, we live them.”

He asks the Coyote Man how he knows what he knows and warns him of making accusations of strangers.

“You carry grief, and you carry guilt. A murderer carries one, a victim the other. Neither both. If you killed her, it wasn't murder. I know more of both than I care to explain. May I help?”

He nods.

The Coyote Man stabs him with a knife, and the sun ascends to noon, blanching the shadow he had hid in.

2. Then,

We loved each other. We loved each other more than we had ever loved anyone, and more than we loved anything. Absolutely anything at all. We were to each other as breath: beloved, beautiful breath on spring's First dawn, giving not only life, but the desire to live.

Ironically, as we grew to love each other more and more, as life grew more and more pleasing, we grew more and more withdrawn. Separated together, and isolated without interruption, we found we had little want for anything but ourselves. Families fell by the way, work fell into neglect, and religion fell into feign. We grew to be our own gods, and, usurped, the rightful fell from their thrones. We abdicated from life in favor of our new, caecilian, interpretation of wholeness. We completed each other so well that we left no room open for anything else to hold meaning.

Our love drew jealousies. Friends left us and families left us. We were alone. Alone together. Life only became more perfect, more desirable, and more autocratic. We built our lives around us, excluding them. Idyllic, beautiful perfection! Nothing but us.

We had stopped worshiping. We had stopped praying and sacrificing. We had taken to heresy. The strength of our love had surpassed even that of the gods; the strength of our love was of such potency as to be sacrilegious. We had transcended the need for a greater
power. We were the greatest power. Mortal completion was intolerable, as it made gods and afterlife redundant. If perfect happiness was available in this world, there was absolutely no reason to pass to the next.

The unnatural strength of our love attracted a god. A god bitter out of envy approached me one night in my sleep. He was terrible to behold, corrupted and polluted. A hunched and dripping figure gripped every foreground as I slept, and I could find no peace until, by day, my love overpowered it back into its shadows. The miserable deity returned the next night, and spoke in the low, rough voice of blistering burns and pungent moisture.

“Life itself warrants death: anything with a beginning must be ended. The natural cycle dictates that catastrophe and disaster birth themselves from the end of the beautiful. Pleasure breeds pain even in its throes. Protection, immunity, and impunity is offered. Immunity and impunity from the pain of life. The pain you know so marginally.”

He showed me without pictures or words my lover's death. I felt the profound emptiness of undeniable doubt. I saw my own religion proved false and my god declared dead. Nothing left to support me, I fell. I fell away from the Debased Deity and awoke to my lover, breathing deeply. I didn't sleep for the rest of the night.

The day passed with the grime and film of unsettling fear. Every innocent occurrence carried the god's portent. A storm promised instantaneous death from lightning, drowning, or worse. A cough guaranteed a Sisyphean, terminal demise. Everything I had relied on every one of a million devious happenstances miraculously avoiding my path. The happiness I had felt ached and burned.

The night brought with it dread and trepidation. My lover felt my unease and tried, unsuccessfully, to comfort me. We had very little experience with the negative spectrum of emotions. His face showed an intimate awareness of our collapse. I drifted to sleep after hours of tense waiting.

The Debased clasped my consciousness. He stared into me with eyes that did not exist. “I am reality: hideous, cloying truth. You but glimpsed my shadow and influence. Now, listen: I shall end it all, with you either crying or laughing.”

I asked him how to assure the two things I feared for the most: my sanity and my love.

“You must choose one, as each negates the other. Either you see the world, or you hide yourself from it.”

I told him that I chose love. Love had made my life beautiful and harmonious. If sanity carried dread and death, I wished nothing of it. “Let me once again conceal myself within false truth.” And so, I chose my love over my world.

The filth of the Debased spread and surrounded me entirely. His voice seemed omnipresent and wept of the dark. “The shock of being woken from such a dream could
break the strongest man. You will die, and you will die an early death. There is another option. Forsake your love and restore the natural cycle you have broken. The cycle of life and death you have discontinued through ignorance powerful enough to negate actuality; ignorance you have bred through absurd love. I promise you, if you do not yourself correct your transgressions, they will be thoroughly wiped clean with blood."

I immediately awoke and saw my lover beside me. I knew that he would be gone from my life, and I couldn't bear the thought. I climbed out of bed and made my way outside, where I sobbed quietly for an indeterminable amount of dark time beneath the new moon.

A small, animalian man limped up to me and flashed a set of sharp teeth. “Problems?” he asked in a disarming growl. I stared, frozen out of fear. He felt completely different from the Debased, yet part of the same.

“Are you a god?”
“Every bit as much as you are.”
“So you're not. I need one...” I trailed off into a whimper caused by the fear of my dreams and the man talking to me. He howled in terrifyingly beautiful laughter.

“You don't. You need me. You need you. You need us. We can fix anything,” he spoke comfortably.

“You don't understand...”
“No, I do. You can escape. There is a place where even he can't touch you. Send your lover away tomorrow night on an errand, and eat these.”

I decided to trust him. Any hope was better than none.

3. SOON

All too soon, everything will happen. They, peacefully, beatifically and in perfect harmony will lie supine for perpetuity. ETERNITY- such a pleasing concept I (once knew) soon will know! Mine, all mine all mine all mine all mine (ours) all mine all mine it will be all mine.

I hope they will realize and understand and comprehend and believe I did it for them. If any doubt or question or confusion will grip them, I shall allay. They will mean more to me, they will be more important to me than my spoils and gains. They will be my spoils and my gains, in fact and truth and reality.

“Truth will prevail and conquer,” I said. The other half of me, however, will deny this to death, and death will not take him. Funny, I soon will say as I reascend, how truth was almost felled by love, its closest, dearest, nearest ally. The other half will soon protest that both are threats much too valid to sovereignty to be tolerated in any real form or shape or incarnation. I will correct and admonish him, and I will tell him that sovereignty is born of truth and love.
Love will forever be looked upon with a hint and shade of wonder and stupor. I soon will have conquered love through what will appear to be murder, but, I will and shall promise it was anything but. Their love conquered me, split me, broke me, and I soon will return to wholeness through their love in a matter most cyclic. I simply will say I conquered them through truth. The truth is often much more harsh and rough than love, and, unfortunately, the truth will be that their love was too powerful for mortality. It will be said that they almost nearly stole my godhood through love. Their love was powerful enough to break and split me, and both of me tried to fix the transgression. I was successful first, luckily, and brought them out of the small, ordained realm of mortality to a position where their love will be able to exist and grow and shine indefinitely. A position that will allow me to reattain my status with myself.

Love and truth are concepts too powerful to be whimsically trifled with.