

# ***BEYOND THE LIGHT***

A short story by JK Savoy

*Based on an excerpt from my dystopian novel, 'And Then, There's Lily'  
This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.*

As the heating coil met the witch's brew beneath my butt, I shouted; *'Hell no! Bethani's hairdryer is no substitute for toilet paper!* Then, there was the sudden sound of me hitting the floor as I wondered in the darkness, *'Is this how I feel, or is this how I've become?'* After struggling to raise one eyelid and then the other, I peered through a mucousy haze only to become unexpectedly calmed by the brightest of lights. Basking in its glow, it was as if time itself had ceased to be as my mind and body became completely free of all thought, desire or needs: Purely taking comfort knowing that there was no need to move at all, since all surrounding me was in some way a part of me, and I had become a part of it all. Captivated by the glow, I blinked away what seemed to be gallons of dried eyeball secretion as I found myself submitting more and more to the ubiquitous light. Becoming resigned to my new state of being, I began focusing upon countless outlines within the stunning brightness and then to recognize my torso, my arms and my legs energized and flailing about, while I heard myself asking, "Okay, why the hell am I resting on one of many white Barcaloungers in an endless amphitheater? Since everything else, including myself, is purely an aspect within this endless vista of whiteness, does this exclude the value of beginnings, endings or a need for any order at all, since all that may have once

mattered is merely a blur to begin ... or to end with? Or, what the fuck am I even talking about?"

From within the sea of emerging outlines surrounding me, I heard a voice; a very powerful voice: A voice stating, "The answer is this, Denis: It is because you are lounging in a skybox overlooking the arena of all there is, was or ever will be! Welcome, my boy. Surely, we have been expecting you."

Gaping at what appeared to be a floor beneath all that was forming before me, I replied, "Expecting me? The arena of all there is ...? Who are you? Did I just ask a you question?"

Finding it difficult to move my head in order to find the place from where the voice came, I remained preoccupied on the gathering of shapes and outlines surrounding me while hearing it reply, "Yes! You will have many more questions, Denis. And your questions will seem to answer themselves just as they are asked ... But who is asking ... and why ask?"

"Begging your pardon dude, I'm fucking asking! Hey! Hang on! How in hell do you know my name?"

"Soon enough Denis, all will become as clear as clear can be. Just a moment ago my boy, you asked, *'Why the h--l am I resting on one of many white Barcaloungers in an endless amphitheater?'* So now, you know that you are doing that simply because you are. You see, all is that simple here."

The instant I said, "Nothing is clear! It's all a damn blur!" I managed to turn my head toward the voice only to notice that seated on a Barcalounger beside me was a faceless, white-suited silhouette whose pointing finger had vanished into the haze as I shouted, "You look like a fucking glass of milk! Who the fuck are you, and where the fuck is Bethani?"

Before I could gain any recognition of the voice or find any definition of the blurs within the whiteness taking on various shapes before me, it declared, "Just know this, Denis! None of that is important."

"Not important? Since when isn't Bethani important? Whoever you are; I need answers and I need them now!"

"Now is all, and all is now! Yes, questions will grow from answers which are there to be questioned when the proper words come to us. But none of that is important for now." As if the voice held a joystick to my eyeballs, my vision was directed ahead as it went on to say, "Denis, amongst all that there is before us; is all that you have acquired, created or otherwise brought forth. All that you have achieved is and will be a part of you forever, my boy. And you and all of these things are part of all that will ever be, since each and all of us here is and always will be the sum total of, The Creator!"

Like my long ago dorm room lava-lamp having gone bug fuck wild, framed between my two large toes hanging off the edge of my Barcalounger; stock certificates, buildings, a fleet of aircraft and deeds to massive real estate holdings began to emerge. Lo and behold, my entire Denis Blake empire was amazingly joining me! As I gazed into the void of a faceless image from where the voice came, slowly his obscured scant facial features began to gain a degree of outline. Suddenly, a long ago news bulletin came to my mind as I shouted to the white-suited essence beside me, "Holy shit! I fucking know who you ... are? Hell no! How in hell? You're ... Sam Walton?"

"Precisely, and guilty as charged, Denis my boy."

"How can any of this shit be? Sam Walton is ... dead?"

"Yes, it is really me, and I am as real as I really can be."

“Dude, what the hell is going on here? I mean ...”

“Shhh, Denis. By the way, we do not use such odious words as *h – ll* up here ... nor any of those other profanities!”

“Yeah, Yeah! Cool, I’ll try to... Here? Hey dude! Exactly where ... is here? And what the ... Hey, what’s going on? Exactly where the hell are we?”

“What is the difference, Denis? You are here, right? Do not look beyond the fact that here is where we are, and all that is with us where we are, is not where it can never be.”

“What? I need a better explanation than that, dude ...”

“Shush ... it all is, simply because it all is, and nothing more. Denis my boy, we are here and knowing that we are here is all that matters. You see, it is all as simple as that!”

Though wondering, *‘Why is his manner of speech bereft of contractions,’* I mustered what composure I could, looked the apparition in the face and said, “Get this dude, soon, my fucking alarm clock will ring and I’ll simply walk myself to the crapper, wondering what it was I somehow forgot!”

“It is your choice to believe what feel you must believe. Meanwhile Denis, do not allow yourself to become lost in the hope of what may never be and lose sight of what truly is.”

Longing for the sensation of a bursting bladder to end the reverie, I became resigned to the possibility that a saving dash to the toilet may not be in the offing and said, “So okay, somehow I’m here with you, and you and I are having this conversation. Dream or no dream, just be straight! Since you’re dead and I’m . . .!” Yearning for a reassuring sensation of a cold chill which might validate my existence, I thought, ‘Hold the fuck on! I can’t even recall yesterday itself!’ and then I asked him, “What the . . .? What the hell is all this?”

“Son, before us is the awakening of all you have ever been, so you might behold the greater understanding of all that awaits you! All of this is what falls into hands of those of us who kept our eye on the ball. Those of us who stayed our vision always knew, deep down, that what was ours should remain eternally ours because we are indeed who we are.”

“And exactly who in hell are *we*?”

“Denis my boy, we are those who set ourselves apart and above from all of those who had gathered beneath us, while they begged for what they believed to be their share.”

Gaping through the wedge that formed from my parted feet, resting upon the Barca’s ottoman-like base, I said, “Why the hell am I here, and why is everything that I ever owned right the fuck here at my feet? Anyway, you cannot be Sam Walton. He is ...! Shit! Whoever you are, speak straight!”

“Denis my boy, there comes a time when all will see the light. There came that time when I did and crawled from the shadows. It was I who helped to close overpriced American factories and make the deals to have their products created far cheaper in China.” He chuckled and went on to say, “Then I resurrected those same factories as retail outlets, hired the prior benefits-rich union workers as minimum wage clerks, and had them sell inferior imports to bargain hungry buyers. Now, here I am, amongst other enlightened giants of time!”

I shouted, “No way! Since when can your fast-tracking of the return of slavery itself be called ... enlightenment? Is it because slavery is now an All-Inclusive for everyone except you and your other giants of slime friends?” He smiled and looked away as I shouted, “Dude, you are just pitching plain

old greed driven, mercenary bullshit! In no way can you be Sam Walton! He was a decent guy. So who in hell are you?"

I paused while realizing that I had, somewhere along the line, yielded to the urge to speak bereft of contractions as the vision replied, "If I am not Sam Walton, then who else could conceive and then create infinitely stretching mega-malls with ample access and parking for one and all?"

While watching my business empire continuing to assemble before my eyes, faster than I could count parking spaces, I shouted, "Okay, what you say must be true! Only Sam Walton could do that! By the way, may I call you Sam?"

"Of course, you may, Denis."

"Sam, why is all I ever owned right here at my feet?"

"That is a good question, son: It is, because all that is at your feet must always be within your immediate grasp, as should all that you might perceive, believe and afterwards conceive. Rejoice Denis! Your kingdom is boundless. There is no end to all there is to foresee and to bring forth, my boy."

"Okay Sam, let us pretend that I am a total idiot. So tell me, just what is going on here?"

As he said, "Behold, Denis! All that is going on here is the ongoing of all that truly is!" I looked to a place within the haze where Sam pointed. Suddenly, all became totally clear and defined. As if teleported into an enormous I-Max screen, my unearthly 'self' melded with skyscrapers, shopping centers and massive factory farms all bearing the name, '*BLAKE ENTERPRISES*' – As if encased in a giant Frisbee, I joined an endless stream of gold coins falling into a hopper with a flashing neon sign reading, "*DENIS! -- DENIS! --*"

*DENIS!*" Finally feeling as being one with all, I said, "Okay, for real Sam, truly I must be fucking dead!"

"Think again, Denis! We are dead only to the world we believed that we had known."

"So, if I am a goner; where is the next step to the, uh... Ultimate illumination?"

"Next step? Stop right there! The notion of Next Step is a precipice to oblivion! Next Step is a march for fools walking in endless circles seeking nothing but nothingness while in search of what has been beneath their feet all along."

"So, this is it? You are saying that this is all there is?"

"The here and now is all there is, and what lies before you is the complete overview of the here and now. This is the ultimate illumination! There is nothing more, son."

"If it is all that simple, Sam; why did we not see it while we were alive ... on Earth?"

"We must have and we must have held our ground, Denis. Because we are here, right?"

"Am I missing something, Sam?"

"The enlightened visionary walks upon the Earth gathering unto him all of the fruit of the garden that he can hold; for it is good and it is plentiful for those who see."

"Fruit? Hold on, Sam! Was there not a fruit that was forbidden on Earth? What was it? Oh yeah, partaking of that fruit led to Humankind's downfall... Wait! If we partook of all of the fruit from the masses then why and by whom, are we being so amply rewarded? Where then is the decider?"

"Those who create the rules, are the deciders! And we are they – they who have say. Know this, Denis: That which is forbidden is what we have decreed as being forbidden for

those who might rise up and take it from us! We set the best aside for ourselves while telling children about bogeymen and hobgoblins. It all goes to Creation itself: The rules and laws of life are extensions of the hands of those who, over time, have established them. Denis, you are no different than the rest of us. You must have known that all along.”

“The rest of us? Clue me in, Sam. I must have known exactly what?”

“Known about the platitudes – Those things we feed to the masses – Panaceas, things we need for them to believe so they will not nip at our heels and mug us if they ever catch up. Think about it, Denis; *‘You cannot take it with you?’* Hah! That was a fairy tale spread by all of us to maintain and conserve what truly is and always will be ours! Was it not you who once said; *‘People are twenty-two percent bull...t mixed with seventy-eight percent water, so it spreads faster?’*

“Yes, I did, Sam. But I was a bit drunk at the time.”

“Denis, the truth is, we actually do take it all with us! No matter what we say unto the herd; not only can we now take it with us, we have always taken it and we will take more! Rejoice! All is there for the taking. And it goes on and on ...”

“Sam, if we do take it with us, then the law had always been with us, as if our right to take all is absolute. Right?”

“Exactly! So give praise unto your faith in the law and order of events, my boy!”

Before I could reply, from the haze, a voice asked, “Did someone say, events? Welcome Denis, my boy! We are so very pleased that you have joined us.” I looked to see that that there was yet another form resting upon a Barca.



Before I could utter a word, Sam said, "Denis, this is PT Barnum. He now represents the Disney / Six-Flags Group."

"The Disney, what?"

Extending his arm in front of me; PT Barnum grasped my hand, shook it and said, "Denis my boy; it is good to see that you have finally joined us."

"Uh ... same here, P.T? Disney/ Six-Flags Group? Here?"

"Please call me Phineas, Denis. Son, my clients have big plans for changing this place and you are going to be a part of it," while Sam smiled, PT Barnum said, "A very wise man once told me, '*People may come and go, but image is eternal*' just as another said, '*There's a sucker born every minute – or uh, dies?*' Whatever! You know where I am going with this."

"No, I do not. If this is it, then what is there to change?"

"Let us put it together, my boy. We are here to change the Eternal-Image! Think about it; those ho-hum classical, silly icons of the final reward are as follows: Clouds filled with harp-strumming, starry-eyed garden slugs – on-and-on singing of praise and adulation to the unknown and the unseen – I could go on forever ... Oh yeah- how fitting. This is Eternity! In fact, I actually am going on forever... Hah!" After taking a gloating moment, Barnum went back on message saying, "But Denis, all of this is going to change. All of those hyper-exalted concepts of Eternity are oh so bloody passé!"

"Passé, Mister Barnum? Huh?"

"Consider this, Denis: Though being the hunter-gatherers that we are, this afterlife never reached its full potential until way back in the 1980s when The Reagan Administration hunted down and bagged the notion of Trickle-Down-Economics. So lo and behold, those everyday

Joe Schmoe get into the hunt and gathered their roses while they may. Then voila, those Joe Schmoe are suddenly trading moguls, or so they believed! My boy, ever since Newt Gingrich's Contract with America, we have been swamped with believers in good old laissez-faire government: People who want to be just like us!" Then he winked and whispered, "Denis, and we will let them go along believing they are just like us – Hah!" then quickly went back on message; "So, by-gum-by-golly, because of all those believers who have become investors in The American Dream, the Dow finally crosses the ten-thousand threshold and those Joe Schmoe all become millionaires, and then some! This is truly great! No more annoying middle class! That said, Management has seen the need for certain changes to be made here. And that is where Disney / Six-Flags comes in. And Denis my boy, this is where you come in now that you are here with us."

"Me?"

"Absolutely, you are the man, Denis! Your investor's instinct sent the gathering of wealth to new heights. As the creator of a vast fortune from nothing but five bucks, you became the wunderkind of finance and acquisition! We need your vision and direction. This is just the beginning, Denis!"

"Beginning? How can Eternity have beginnings? Is it not without beginning nor end!"

While Walton smirked, Barnum softly uttered, "We will pretend we did not hear that, Denis."

Uneasily, I said, "I am but a newcomer. So, you tell me how that is not so."

Barnum said, "Like I always say, "It all goes to spin! One must spin it to win it! Though people may come and go, spin

is the infinite impetus that takes rags to riches, then to here!" Before I could utter my question, Barnum went on to state: Spin! Spin is without beginning nor end! It is the ongoing flow of everything that matters, such as all of matter itself! Eternal spin – Wow! Sell that one in aisle thirteen, Sam!"

Sam took over saying, "Everything changes, and those of us who man the helm of change will decide the fate for all. Simply put, it all comes down to setting the course of events: Once upon a time, Ronald Reagan pointed to a shining castle in the sky and all of America hasn't stopped gaping. David Stockton, Jim and Tammy-Faye Bakker took on the task of setting the course to that vision with Supply Side Economics and Evangelical theme parks. Soon after, corporations and nuevo-organized religions found camaraderie and assumed their rightful place of power in America, and eventually upon the entirety of Earth! Because of all of that, everything must become different here too, Denis!"

"Different? Please tell me how the afterlife can become any different, Sam?"

"My boy, a glorious afterlife must always be the eternal carrot at the end of the mundane stick. Perception is all, and that all goes to expectation! The exalted will remain the exalted providing they, eternally, transcend the ordinary. Bottom line; we must eternally thrill those ever-growing crowds of consumer-investors. We can do this better than ever because we have a consensus-based corporate format for getting things done right! To best know the right way, we must look back at what had been the wrong way."

"The wrong way?"

“Yes Denis, the wrong way: Prior to The Corporate Model, Heaven, Nirvana, Valhalla or whatever you want to call it was managed with more of a tribal war lord system. As Humankind became more sophisticated, it evolved into the Imperial Roman System and yada-yada-yada...”

Sam yada-yadad on and on. As if it were routine, he and Barnum ducked. I did the same when thousands of life-size inflatable naked female forms flew just a tad bit above our heads. “What are those things?” I exclaimed as the last of the barely pubescent faux females descended into what looked like an ancient walled city in the distance.

With Sam’s “... yada-yada-yada...” evolving to the comprehensible, as if oblivious to largest flyover since the Berlin Airlift, he said, “Oh, those? Not to worry, Denis. We create them beyond the eastern rainbow. They always fly over us, right about now.”

“But what or who were they?”

Sam replied, “They are part of the new Martyr’s Reward Program. Each suicide-bomber gets somewhere around seventy. The important thing is, all of them must be brand spanking new. No pre-owned! By the way, whenever they pass overhead, pretend you do not see them.”

“Why, Sam?”

“It is simple. The martyrs believe that they are all alone here. It is just part of the deal ...”

“Oh ...”

While Barnum scanned the stadium, the Disney / Six-Flags rep went back on message; “Denis my boy, what you are seeing here are our results of keeping up with the times. Prior to easy living Barcaloungers overlooking impeccably

maintained amphitheaters, there were concrete benches lining massive Coliseum style arenas; totally unsuitable for today's needs. There were brutal behind the scenes takeovers with daggers: Quite unlike how things have become recently on Earth, with empty stock options and failed pensions. It is hard to imagine Heaven and various final rewards options before Reaganomics. And now, things will become different here too! We are all here to keep up with new techniques. In fact, speaking of final rewards, at this very moment, a collaboration of creative souls from the American Express Points Department and Disney / Six Flags marketing group is forming a Final Rewards points program. Get this! There is this killer of a slogan: *'Your points pointing the way to The Way.'* Is it not great? In new times come new demands!"

"New demands? Times? Phineus, I do not understand any of this. I thought time was irrelevant up ... here."

Laughing, Sam chimed in to say, "Denis! Come on boy. Time marches on, as always –always does, always will! And since this place is quickly filling up with 401-K – IRA and Lotto recipients, it is best that we allow them think time has ceased to hasten the process."

"Process, Sam?"

"Denis whether it is bogeymen, hobgoblins or a shiny red Macintosh in the serpent's grasp; we Creators must exercise our right of Divine Delusion. In this case, we void time itself and the concept of accruing interest. People may come and go, but dividends are forever! So, we declare time to be irrelevant and have them turn over control of their

holdings to us and ... well, ol' PT Barnum can explain it better. Take it away, Phineas!"

The stadium changed to a grand screen. Matter-of-factly, Phineus Barnum began what appeared to be a ubiquitous PowerPoint presentation. With video clips of happy faced Joe Schmoes coming into view, he said, "To us, these nouveau-riche players are like the ancient knights, earls and dukes were to kings and emperors. Vassals have always been taught to accept how kings determine things are to be, and these suckers are no different!"

With more clips showing white-shrouded souls gliding up infinite escalators and pouring from fleets of never-ending limos, Barnum said, "Welcome to The Rapture! They are here and more are coming in droves! Now that the ranks of the nouveau-riche are ever-expanding, we must give them what we have conditioned them to want at all cost. While we cash in on their ongoing interest, they go about spending the principle they have accrued. Hah! And once that is gone; then they can all go to ...."

To which, Sam chimed in to say, "Ah-ah, Phineas. No h-e double hockey sticks! Remember, there is a higher standard to uphold here."

"Back to what you were saying, Sam. Exactly what is it that we taught them?"

"Denis, we have given them the idea of majority rule through the Federalist / Corporatist chain of command and their blind obedience to it. Now they can continue to do so for Eternity or bankruptcy, whichever comes first."

"Wait a moment!" I shouted, "First? Last? Always? I thought those concepts were irrelevant here. Now you talk

of passé and things of the eventual?" The stadium filled with ever-increasing cheering souls as I asked, "Is this Heaven not where we must all share ... equally?"

While laughing and slapping at their bellies, Walton and Barnum rolled about on their Barcas as Sam said, "People do come and go, boy; but command and control are eternal! Come to think of it, we never took control over them: They simply gave it to us because we convinced them that they need us then, now and forever! Even when we stepped aside and slithered into the shadows of government, and they wallowed in the delusion of Democracy, which we allowed them to have, they still demanded some form of royalty. Serfs that they are, they will always require a charismatic couple who will set themselves apart and above all others to be worshiped and obeyed. And the fact that they are still feeling that way is very good for us, Denis."

"Good for us?"

Barnum said, "Yes, my boy. It all goes to the Divine-Dichotomy – contrast if you will. How can Heaven be Heaven if we have it all without the meek to envy us for having it? Now that they believe in us, we have to redo this place with the Corporate Model in mind. And hey, Sam thinks that Infinity-Mountain and a few other good rides to distract the rabble while we do what we do won't hurt either...You know, something to keep them in massive, eternal lines – good old busy work while we see to business as usual, hah!"

Suddenly, it was as if the amphitheater's whiteness began to suck up the souls, the skyboxes and every one of the Barcas. "While screaming, "What's going on?" an abrupt sense of calm came over me when I realized that I had used a

contraction! I held on to the arms of my chair. Like serpent's heads, Sam and P.T.'s laughing faces swallowed their own bodies whole: their forms dissolving into a huge implosion occurring all around me.

From somewhere, a gentle woman's voice cried, "Denis-Denis! Can you hear me?" sounding as if it were a thousand miles away, it implored, "Please say something, anything!" As if she were salvation itself, all that I had ever known myself to be, moved toward her voice.

With an image of The Rapture's spellbound souls, careening past me in endless rollercoaster cars bound for blissful oblivion, I felt myself roll to the side in avoidance of the screaming masses only to find my face soaking in a puddle of my own sweat. A soft hand pressed a cooling wet towel to my forehead. My eyes opened and I looked into those of a faintly familiar woman. Sitting up, I asked, "I do know you ... don't I?"

"I certainly hope so, you idiot. It's me, Bethani!"

Searching in vain for sky boxes, Barcas or infinite vistas, I asked, "Bethani, are we fucking dea...?"

"Denis! What in hell did you do to my hairdryer?"



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