



*When a mind races in slow motion, thoughts seem to tumble over one another, vaguely organized but without any apparent plan. A flood.*

*As images cascaded wildly through his mind, Eric Bishop still managed to isolate and focus on a few specific details in the swirling tumult.*

*He rolled to his back and lay on the cool grass staring at the bright moon above. His weariness felt much deeper than the familiar fatigue caused by long hours at the Robarts Library a few blocks away. There were many late nights and long hours as he finished assignments and prepared for the finals two weeks hence. But this was different.*

*His sister's face flashed before him and he thought about how, in other circumstances, she might tease him about the salty wetness on his cheeks. He wished she were here with him now. Although they are twins, he's always felt like an older brother, charged with the responsibility of protecting her. But in reality, she is strong-willed and determined enough to take care of herself. More than a twin-sister, more than a female reflection of himself; she is smart, kind, extraordinarily bright and as totally devoted to him as he is to her. They share their thoughts and problems and support one another unconditionally. She is indeed a special person.*

*He thought about Gayle too. A year younger; his soulmate and love. She and his sister get along tremendously and he is blessed to have both of them in his life.*

*After graduation he will to propose to Gayle. He thought about how great it will be to finally be able to call her his wife. They talked about having children together; three: two boys and a girl. He thought about all the names they discussed for their children, and what special little people they will be.*

*A gentle spring rain had subsided earlier in the evening leaving the night sky clear and clean. The grass beneath him is wet: cool, fresh and sweet smelling. A soft, damp cushion that might normally offer some relief from the summer heat and humidity, but not tonight. In fact, he is unusually cold and thirsty. Strange, because only minutes before, he was hurrying across College Street at the intersection where Saint George becomes Beverly Street and sweating profusely.*

*Graduation is coming soon and he thought about how much there is to do in preparation for all of the job interviews coming his way in a few weeks. Gayle is as excited about his graduation as he, and next year she will finish her undergrad degree as well. Then they will start a family.*

*With considerable effort he managed to lift himself onto his right elbow and look north, back along Beverly. A dark-coloured car is in the*

middle of the College Street intersection facing east, almost as if it's frozen in position, just twenty-metres away. He stared blankly at the tinted windows, like the emotionless black eyes of some monstrous insect. After a moment or two ... or ten ... it hurried away.

He fell back, landing hard despite the short distance. The jolt elicited a searing scream; ear-splitting and, at the same time, rather surreal. As though it came from some other place, from some other person.

He can't remember stumbling those few metres before falling where he now lay. Odd, considering he can still remember the swing set in the backyard years ago when he and his sister would compete to see who could go higher. In fact, the memory is quite vivid. She had no fear when she was young. He also remembers the time when he helped her up, wiped her tears and held her close to comfort her after a fall from her new bike. She had a skinned knee and was frightened, but only for a moment. Predictably, she got right back on that bicycle and didn't give up until she mastered it.

He thought about how proud his mother will be when he has a successful career and has presented her with the grandchildren she wants so very much. He thought about how long and hard he has toiled to finally get to this point in his life.

He thought about all of those things.