

# ENGLISH

## Creative Writing Piece

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Martin had been sitting at his desk for twenty hours now, his computer tablet taking up most space, while fringed with documents and the remains of his 10pm and 4am sandwiches.

As Martin packed most of his belongings, leaving others to wait until his return in four hours' time, an image popped up on his computer screen. It was an all too familiar image, hundreds of straight lines leading to a far off point in the centre, as though looking down a never ending cylindrical abyss. Martin felt sick, and wrung his hands together as a mechanised voice; his computer P.A. informed him of his 11am appointment at the Dormio centre.

Martin paced the room, running his hands feverishly through his hair and moaning through gritted teeth. Looking in the mirror, Martin was awestruck. Twenty years could not make it feel normal.

Though his hair was tousled, and his cheeks slightly flushed, there was no trace of tiredness or fatigue. The sole evidence his twenty hour shift was the slight five o'clock shadow creeping upon his jaw. Martin knew he could easily resume his seat and begin his shift all over again, as he often did when he was behind with the latest statistics; and all the while he knew that even three days straight in that office would not remove the sparkle in his eye nor the energy of his body. That's what came of the twenty four hour life that Dormitol provided.

Mustering all his resolve, Martin strode from his office building and straight into a waiting taxi, trying to drive from his mind the frightful image of the Dormitol brand. Martin stared into his lap, not wanting to look outside, for in his phobia, every circular object would morph and grow – becoming the endless void that he had come to fear.

Once arriving, Martin took a seat in the waiting room of the Dormio centre; closing his eyes to avoid the bright smiling faces that plastered the walls and the intrigued faces of the people around him.

Leaning back against the wall, facing the calming blankness of the stark white ceiling, Martin attempted to control his increasingly frantic breathing; not noticing how his right leg shook, nor how he wrung his hands together. He was truly petrified.

Around him, people shuffled in their seats, slowly shifting away from Martin, as though his phobia and its effects were somehow contagious. They all breathed a collective sigh of relief as the Doctor came to escort Martin to a room; their eyes following him along the corridor with looks of disgust and contempt.

After placing Martin on a bed, alongside three others bed in one of the many rooms in the maze of the centre, the Doctor placed, thick black, Velcro straps across Martin's arms, legs and midsection; leaving him pinned to the bed.

"Now, now, Mr Stevenson" said the doctor, in the calmest tones he could muster. "You know this procedure all too well; heck, you were part of the team that created it," he chuckled softly at the irony.

"Just relax; it'll be over before you know it."

The doctor placed a large blue pack on the underside of Martin's right arm, and with the press of a button, a needle broke into his vein and released the thick, yellowish liquid of Dormitol. Martin shivered as he felt the substance traverse through the course of his body.

Call over a young nurse, by the name of Penny, who, being thirteen or fourteen years old, was no doubt a new university graduate, the doctor asked her help to pull out a large machine. Once turned on, it hovered over Martin's whole body and began turning, like a massive fan. Martin suppressed a scream at the sight; the symbol of Dormitol, the never-ending lines that seemed to travel backwards in space.

Then his body began to swell. His muscles and skin became hard and solid, making it impossible to tell the difference from that of bone. The rocks of his body grew, swelling to double their natural size, as though under some strong, immediate-action steroids. Martin's heart pounded and his breath escaped in raps; it was only the thick black bonds that held him that prevented his convulsing body from falling to the floor.

Penny watched, both intrigued and repelled, while other patients watched in fascination as Martin's breathing began to slow and his body returned to its usual, slim size.

After what seemed like hours, Martin was released from his Velcro bonds and sat upon his bed; the sole evidence of the procedure being only his highly flushed skin, and his clothes; now drenched in sweat.

Head pounding, Martin stood and walked from the room as fast as he could in his bewildered state. He hid his face behind his black fringe, now sticky with sweat, in an attempt to avoid further embarrassment from those who gawked or laughed at him. The last thing he need was for another to recognise him as a co-creator of his own personal form of torture.

With slumped shoulders and face downcast, Martin didn't notice a young woman in front of him until he ran into her. Putting some distance between himself and the woman, who was talking to a nurse, he proceeded to lean on the opposite wall; staring at the young and the load she carried. For in her arms, fast asleep, with an adorable face nestled into the crook of his mother's neck, was a little boy. Martin watched with amazement at the boy's face, so tranquil and at peace, with his blond hair flopped messily around.

His reverie was broken by a nurse's comment "Poor Darlin', it's almost a shame we have to wake you little man..."

Martin felt an anger, foreign to his usual submissive temperament, consume him; an anger at himself for what he had caused and for the peace and tranquillity, society's insistence for "greater economic prosperity", had to be sacrificed.

Martin approached the women purposefully, tapping the mother on the shoulder, hoping to explain to her the error of her decision in a civil and logical manner. Opening his mouth to speak, his words were cut short by a piercing glare he received from the mother, who then turned her face away repulsion and disgust.

Completely disheartened, Martin skulked from the building, avoiding eye-contact with everyone he encountered. Resigned to the fate that Dormitol had prescribed him, Martin got into a taxi and asked for the Business District; what did it matter if he started a few hours earlier on his next twenty hour shift.