

# Faces of Death Revisited

*by* Christian Bell

VI. At work, a big green fist breaks through the window and clobbers his head through six walls. The big green guy who owns the fist saw the sixteenth floor as necessary damage on the way across town. He, the necessary damage, was a husband, father, son.

VII. Twelve minutes ago, the missiles were launched. He's out at a neighborhood eatery, playing Centipede and eating an Italian sausage. Word came through, sirens going off, the old guy working the grill jumps the counter, chucks his paper hat and says, run for it, kid, this is it. So he runs, gripping the remains of the Italian sausage wrapped in foil. People are screaming, panicked, cars crashing. He can see home. Mom, Dad—did they make it. Then there's a blinding flash.

VIII.. Standing in line at a local Chipotle, he's hit by a plasma blast and melted along with the guy in front of him who just ordered a burrito with brown rice, beans, and barbacoa but didn't get to finish. Both of them had just endured waiting in a line that had snaked back to the restrooms. Somehow, even though he'd been completely destroyed, the list he was holding of what to order for his wife and daughter remained untouched.

IX. He's at home watching *Flatliners* (1990) and the power goes out. Shit, he says, sees shadows pass by the windows, fast moving bending wraiths. There's a creaking door, several pairs of footsteps. All he can think of is the movie *Witness* (1985) and the throat-slitting murder in the train station bathroom. Something metal goes through him. He thinks he sees Lou Diamond Phillips before the world goes dark.

X. While sleeping, he's awakened by an earthquake-like rumbling, the morning sky outside turning into night. He looks outside, sees

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everything disappearing like crumbling cookies into what appears to be a giant mouth.

XI. He's not stung by one scorpion but one hundred, simultaneously. The full body pinprick, followed by an electrical shock of pain, eight hundred legs skittering across his flesh. Body paralyzed, he can only look up. A blue sky. He's falling toward it.

XII. At an abandoned warehouse, he's strapped to a chair by a guy with a crawling beast tattoo attached to his arm. The room is infested with dampness, the air is slithering with mold. The guy's going on and on, detailing his evil plan, blah blah blah. He's thinking, seriously, you're a low rent bastard, when he hears the gunshot but doesn't feel a thing.

XIII. In the moments before succumbing, he realizes that five things are true. First is that agreeing to 120% interest on a loan, compounded monthly, was the worst decision he'd ever made. Second is that mom and dad, God rest their souls, were right about everything. Third is that life is too short not to love. Fourth is that life is too short. Fifth is whatever way you die, it sucks.

