

Sing

by Hannibal Tabu

Long blue-jean clad legs hanging off the craggy brick roof, Chris strummed absently at the strings of his dark brown acoustic guitar, tears staining its glossy surface, just below the tiny golden sword swinging from a chain around his neck. Straight sandy brown hair swayed in the wind, although he showed no sign of being cold in a worn gray t-shirt clinging to his muscular frame.

Chris looked up from the chords to glance down at the night-strewn city, laid out like a blanket of fireflies. He chuckled, a sound without mirth or frivolity, and sang.

"From up here the city lights burn like a thousand miles of fire," he croaked, his voice scratchy from sobbing. In pinpoints of illumination he imagined his wife -- *former* wife -- Calli in that Mustang convertible he'd gotten her for a birthday surprise last year, her flowing chestnut hair flapping behind her as she recklessly zipped north on San Vicente. *She's probably not riding alone* ... Chris thought bitterly.

A rush of waves pounded against the beach, to his right, down below the buildings. Thinking of her, in the car he bought, running away from the centuries of love they'd shared, gripped Chris' insides coldly, like a set of icy talon. Another line from the song he was singing came to mind.

He whispered, "For a second, I wish the tides ... would swallow every inch of the city ... as you gasp for air tonight ..."

The waves swelled past their normal break points, and water lapped at the supports of life guard stations. Deep, beyond the shore, it was almost as if the ocean was emitting a kind of rumble, some low moan, as the water reached farther and farther inland. Chris almost

smiled, imagining fifty feet of water engulfing the Sunset Strip, cars tossed about like flotsam, and a submerged Calli grabbing at her throat as the fluid forced itself down her throat ...

Chris' cell phone rang, a simple flip model with a cerulean shade to it and a golden trim. Glancing at the number on the display, he sighed, stood up and answered it.

"Hi, Dad," Chris said sullenly. "I know, I'm sorry ... I know, sheesh! I wasn't *really* gonna do it ... I just got frustrated, and ... what? Oh. No, I guess I haven't stopped. Sorry. Hang on ..."

Chris glanced to his right, where starlit waves approaching the beach were more than twenty feet high. He let loose another sigh, and they faded just as quickly, the waters ebbing back to their normal levels.

"Okay ... okay, I know, Dad, I'm sorry, already," Chris continued into the phone. "Cut me some slack, okay? You know what it's like to feel like this. To lose like this. Yes. Yes, I know this isn't even one of our cities. I know what kinds of spirits it would have pissed off. I shut it down, okay? Look, I've gotta go ..."

Frustrated, Chris snapped the phone shut, glaring at it. "Calli gave me this phone," he said quietly before screwing up his face in frustration, leaning back and hurling it away into the darkness.

Sadly, he sat back down and cradled the guitar like it was the girl he couldn't hold, and sang.

"... I'm here to sing this anthem of our dying day ..."

