

# Snatch X

by Mathew Paust

Accepting the likely identity of the wetness on his cheek--his right cheek, the sensation having appeared it seemed in the hollow just below the malar bone and trickled to a pool at the jaw--relieved with a certain doleful satisfaction his initial quest for resolution, and impelled the segue into a more pressing realm. Whose blood, and how did it get there?

The answer depended in large part on context, he knew, and with this understanding came the astonishing discovery he had no clue as to where he was or even who, his inward focus so intense it excluded all else. The terrain on which he found himself, allowed for no conscious navigation, no initiative to examine sequence or linkages. An awareness did exist, but it was subtle and elusive, a passive cognition with authority only to interpret, to question, hypothesize and form tentative conclusions. What seemed to be memory fragments appeared and vanished with no apparent affinity. An incrementally expanding hunger for pattern made its proximity known through the chaos. Yet a countermanding energy struggled away from all restraints, all familiarity.

Tension between the push and tug of these forces burgeoned and ebbed without apparent rhythm, and this uncertainty created a dichotomy of its own that both pleased and jarred the nerves, requiring of him an acquiescence with no semblance of expectation or chagrin. As a babe, he wondered, in the womb.

