

# excerpt from "The Landscape of the Tattooed Arm."

by RW Spryszak

The spider fingers the dust on the ancient sill hopeful for morsels hidden in the chaff. It is a futile effort as the little breeze, to the spider, is a great wind instead.

It smells of old wet ground, this mass of boughs and limbs of roots hanging down from the half gone ceiling. The building so long neglected nature is reclaiming it. Even the light from the unwilling sun is tangled in it. Would avoid it if it could. Doesn't want to be part of it at all. And under this hanging organic web the floor is covered with broken stones, shards of clay design, busted wooden frames from unnamed edges, and unnameable rubble we the passengers navigate as if nothing is the matter.

Moss grows in corners here. Mold fingers up the walls toward empty windows and across to the doors broken open for good now. But the ticket sellers remain. Terse. Angry. Sick. Gray. Tired. Jokers behind the carnival screen taunting you to throw the ball at the target so the seat breaks and they are dumped into the water below. They play the cash register like a rusted organ. They hand out the correct tickets on brown paper being reused from days gone by. The old schedules adapted to the new realities by pen and hand. There is no color in this world.

There is no color in this world because half the history of mankind is used up escaping from the pain we inflict on our enemies and they on us and we never get there. It's the evil we do to each other in the name of ourselves that moves the antique clock. There is only the

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minute hand left and so we must imagine the hour.

I'd returned from the war in the high country. Only a little man, I sat in this station waiting for my train, my clothes in a neat square bundle on my lap. Up until that moment I didn't realize how much the war had changed everything.

