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Divided Into Zero

By Mitch Davis

I am inside a car...
...driving far into the
countryside with my father.
I am seven years old.
Exactly five weeks from now...
...my father will burn to
death in this very car...
...after driving into a street divider.
The steering wheel will shatter
and drive itself through his torso.
He will die in agony...
burning... impaled...
...his innards exposed
and sizzling upon his lap.
Five weeks from now... but not now.
I will always remember him
as he was on this day.
Repetition is ritual.
There is nothing for me to
discover or understand.
I can only go through the
motions of persistence.
Memories long faded return to
me from out of the darkness.
Even now I disintegrate
in their presence.
It turns my stomach
into broken glass.
In the end, I'll find myself
where I began.
And I shall start again.
At the moment of my cesarean birth...
...the doctor's scalpel sliced
clumsily against my inner thigh...
...opening me as he had
done to my mother.
From the stories I was told,
I bled as profusely as she had.
Looking back now, I can see
that it was a fitting introduction.
Whatever the case and in spite of
my not remembering the incident...
...I've lived my life with a
fascination for bleeding fine cuts.

I can't say that I understand it...
...but it is as much a part of me
as my fingers, eyes and teeth.
Every now and then I pay
for the company of a woman.
I have her stand over me as
she bathes me in her warmth.
I breathe her taste... taste her
smell, marinate in her essence.
I close my eyes and allow her
to run through me.
Imagining her heat as a hot, white
ocean of sanctifying purification.
She runs across my pores,
cleansing them deeply... sweetly.
Erasing everything
that I wish, wasn't there.
Soldering me back together.
But I know that it's my
destiny to remain divided.
Not long after the
death of my father...
...I found my mother hanging
from a light fixture in the kitchen.
There were tears still
moist on her cheeks...
...even though she'd
already begun to turn blue.
I could never understand
why she had chosen to die.
Perhaps the possibility
of living without torment...
...was so far removed
from her realm of experience...
...that she was more afraid of healing
than she was of suffering.
Whatever the case, I was alone.
I waited several days
before calling the police.
I watched her decompose
in the kitchen.
For as long as I could remember,
I felt like an old man.
Now, I am as I had always

perceived myself to be.
I sometimes wonder if the man I was had
ever really existed in the first place.
It all seems like a faint echo
from a past life experience.
As if everyone I've ever known has left to
live their lives in an alternate vortex...
...that I will never find.
I've spent a lifetime
working up the strength...
...to speak to people
who no longer exist.
What's left inside of me
will never find its shape in articulation.
I now know that there will
always be ghosts in me.
They have grown to become
my very foundation.
If there is a God, my sole
prayer is to never be reborn.
There is a crack in the center of me.
I've lost myself deep inside of it.
I can't stop my mind
from haunting my soul.
And all the logic in the world
will not save me.
I don't know how it is
that I'd become what I am.
But my values are meaningless.
I'm cold in my warmth.
Warm in my absence.
I'm very, very afraid.