

## II (Penance)

Fen

Time

That humiliating arbitrary adjudicator  
Your cruelty builds in an endless cycle of decrepitude  
Skin slackens with each passing seconds  
Flesh weakens and softens  
Bones stiffen in agony  
Dreams dissolve  
Hopes slough  
A blackened pulp of deepest despair  
A mind enfeebled and afraid  
Gazes back upon a path of waste and regret  
Gazes ahead only to the cold and the empty

All will fall  
All will fail  
All will fall  
All will fail

And so with each heavy,  
broken-backed step I inch closer to my reckoning  
Sinews stiff, sloughing, sagging  
Resonating with slow decay like catgut strings  
Draped across a stave of rotting timber

The cathedral looms... Tearing, oppressive, stentorian  
Cries once echoed in the chapels of cold stone  
Where cowled figures dripped with feverish piety  
And candles of reverence flickered in the torpid darkness of unanswered prayers

Stoic monolith that bleeds black redemption  
Onyx shroud shed like skin  
Penance driven into the maw of the soil  
Stygian crust that chokes on the carcasses of the forgotten

There is no room here  
Suffocation... Rejection...

A hopeless soul slithers in vapid vestibules  
Echoes  
Silhouettes  
Fading notions of what once breathed false proclamations  
Granite shaped by the echoes of supplication  
Myriad visages gaze in judgement  
A solemn phalanx stands as one  
One singular totem of accusation  
Choral, somnolent striking the marrow  
Of a soul laced with corrosive regret

Guilty - Pathetic - Cringing  
Crushed by stone  
Withering within the inquisition cloisters  
The last shreds of waning hope thus scatter

I cannot see what lurks within these sepulchral shadows  
Emanating whispers of a thousand past condemnations

One thousand past condemnations!

Freezing hands reach - coiling, cloying

My name is but dust

And I flee again