When he wrangled his thoughts back to his breath he felt calm. But the churning mind inside his still body was difficult to tame. He had arrived at the apex of his earlier concerns. Were Blue and Red and beloved Infrared, the disappeared Betty modulators, were they immanent to light or darkness?

This question was important to him once. Less so now. Still, he wondered about the infra. Where (scratch), Who (irrelevant), How, how, how light is the spectrum? How heavy are his monsters?

He meditated on his favorite koans though they brought more irritation than solace. Any hint of a culturally appropriative activity, like sitting in *seiza*, would disturb his digestion. Now everything and nothing mattered. He could feel his beginnings middling.

One day Chao-chou fell down in the snow, and called out, “Help me up! Help me up!” A monk came and lay down beside him. Chao-chou got up and went away.

And ...

A monk asked when he was weighing some flax, “What is Buddha?”
Shunryo said: “This flax weighs three pounds.”

His bespoke koan went like this:

Betty asked: “Does all color spring from lightness or darkness?” They answered: “Why do you ask this question?”

He came and went from slim threads of oxygen intake to tiny carbon dioxide expulsions. All muscle pain subsided as he focused attention. His former mantra – “beginners mind” – had migrated to a simpler “Poof!” recalling Red Betty’s story of the disappearing rabbit. He’d been sarcastic with Red at that fateful dinner party way back when, as she waxed prolific on BB guns and magic. But the image of the ephemeral rabbit, Harvey the light, Harvey the heavy, had lingered.

He’d been flippant with Infrared that day on the wall. Intoxicated by the swell of sunlight in the magnificent atrium he left caution behind. Forgot momentarily that the primary hues exuded by the slopers, jugs, and crimps would transform beneath his goggles to colors he could not name. His irreverence for taxonomical clarity had killed his closest. He’d taken too much for granted. Been so very nonchalant. Enjoyed the thrill, pocketed the danger. He asked himself how it was possible that one who reified the experience of surprise as he did could be so devastated by it? Had he forced a false narrative on the one he most loved? Son of a bitch.

And yeah, so, there’s also that. When it counted, he’d flinched. A rata-tat-tat shot from his throat as he stuttered “Ppppp … ink” as he saw them slipping. In that irrevocable micro-moment, a repeating consonant … five or ten thousand ppppp’s stammered from his throat like an uzi spitting blanks. The precision to detail he’d exerted in everyday life had abandoned him when he needed it. He’d
failed them. Hugged his purple jug with chalky hands as IRB tumbled. Acknowledged the open hole of their gaping mouth as it soundlessly smalled to its vanishing point. Registered the thud at the height of his own panic.

Now, as grounded as possible in full lotus, he was all about in and out. Harvey heavy, Harvey light, Harvey heavy, Harvey light. The visions behind his eyelids were in luminous perfectly exposed high speed infrared black and white.

But there was more. There was always more. He hoped to quell his vacillating bouts of intention as he coped with intense desire. He was a shitty meditator even though he was fooling his clan.

Call it an urge. Call it yearning. His wish? He longed with every porous molecule to become room temperature through an organic process. That would be plus/minus 22° C. Deadly chill for a primate body temp but he had conviction on his side. His desire to radiate infrared wavelengths as a black body was his will to power. He would become a perfect absorber.

He would.

If not, then, Poof!