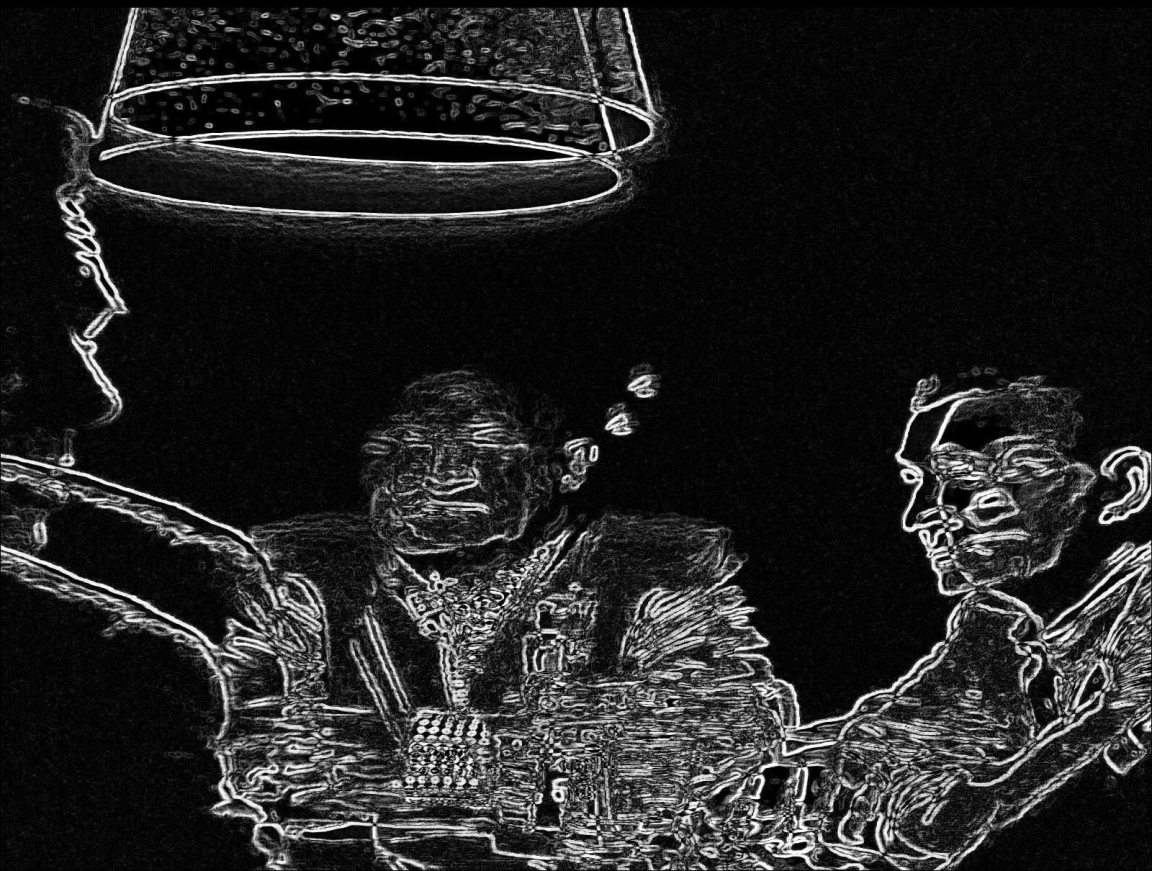


Debt Forgiveness



Francis Raven



That is generally remembered as the day those three guys came around and started demanding that I paid my debts to them. They never stopped.



After that I sort of moved into my car so that I could always be on the go at a moments notice. The rear view mirror became the main lens through which I viewed my life. Every act could now be scrutinized in reverse.



I knew that others had late payments as well, but when I saw them in the streets all I could think was that when the jobs started reappearing I would be fighting them tooth and nail for every position. In a competition, I never came out on top.



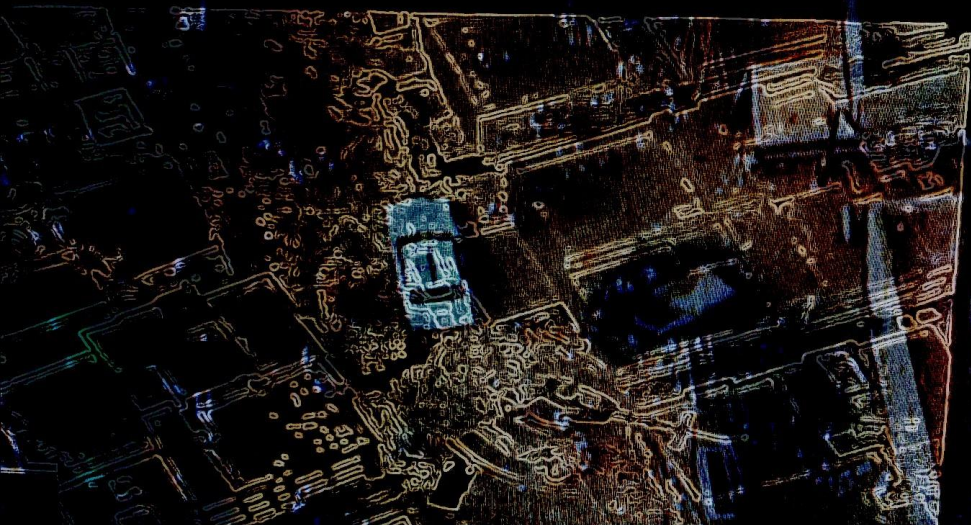
It was an era of hard talks with anyone who would listen. Unfortunately, not many would. I often spoke into an out-of-date dictaphone, though I had long ceased having a secretary and could never muster the will to type the words through to the end.



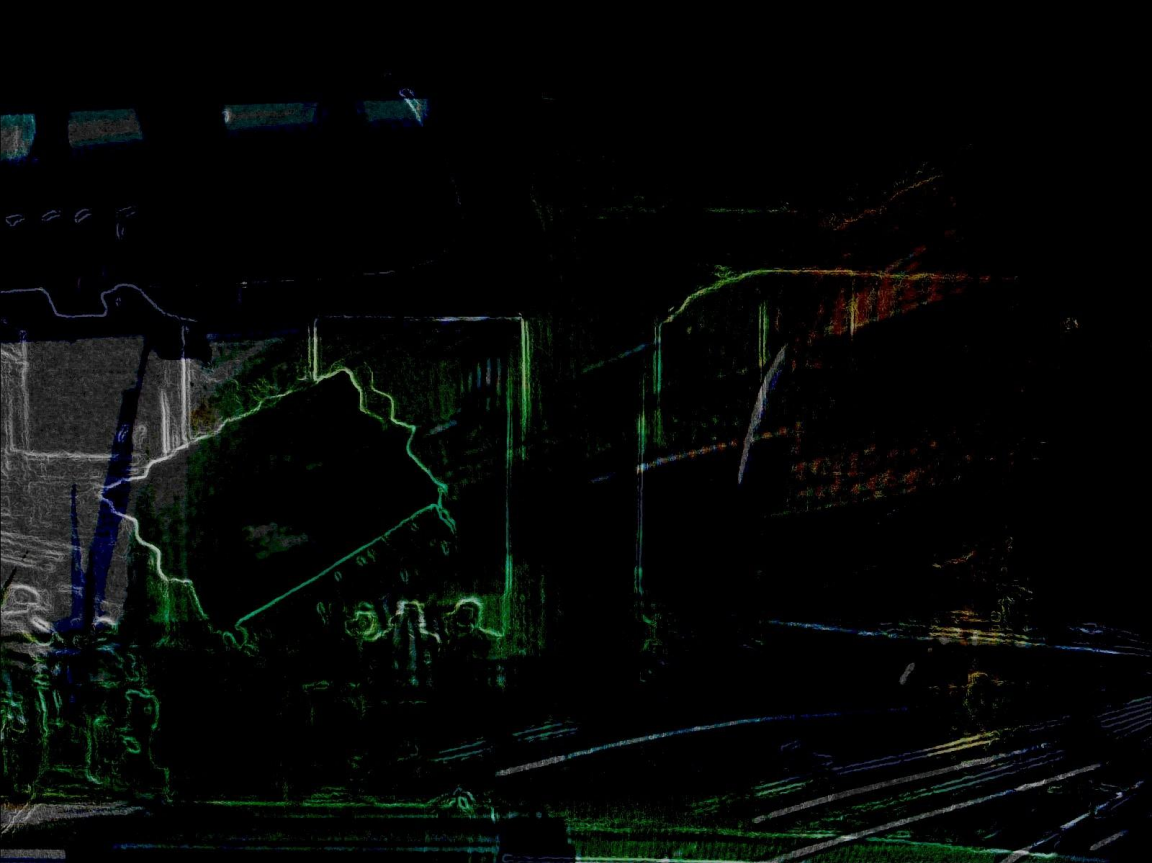
I knew that the situation would not improve during my career. I would never be a physicist again. It became utterly apparent why so many academics were so violent. The lines merely confirmed my suspicions. I often came home from a bureaucratic office bruised after having beaten some other intellectual.



Of course, there were always lucrative military options for a man of my talents. I had just never entertained any of those before. But now, another life seemed necessary. I would leave myself to become another person. I would honor my debts. I would not be killed. This was the concrete I wrote my new name in.



I knew that I would have been killed if I did not help them kill. As an intellectual, I knew that this line of defense was bullshit. On the other hand, it had the advantage of being somewhat true. Now, whether being dead would have made me a more moral man is a transcendental question which a person can never really ask of himself.



Thus, the letter that explained this all to you and asked you never to contact me again. I later heard that you didn't receive it because you had been killed.



**Little kids' stories always end up with someone dying.
Otherwise, there's really no way to wrap everything up.**