

Trans-Amalek Interstate Café

by Max Sparks

A million
car miles
came through here
daily
before
And now, cold
the cafe wall
through a hole
smiles
the
rusted city maw
Changing lanes
to cut the grass
addicts of the past
are now ghouls
He pulls the box
from his tattered
coat
it buzzes broken fax
and he answers the call
He picks up the bike
and it screams a
binary
roar
Through the scattering
white
with the sun low
across hatched
brow
the rider creeps
under
the lowing concrete

sow

The silence shatters
as he twists the throttle
to climb the verge
He sets the bike there
and scans the distant lot
his visor reflects
the drifting plume
They flood the exits
and scatter to the hills
as he stalks across
the forecourt spills
Through the flames
he sees her
wailing
coal-burned
soul
leave the surface
for the thousandth
time
and he walks away
to where
the fallen arches
glow
by the back lot
He approaches
the motel lobby
the door is a frame now
his steps crunch the glass
like frost
under the
emergency light
Upstairs, she awakens
and gathers her children
they creep along the hall
and hear many twisted voices

The leader speaks
in ten tongues
them, they chatter and
seethe
arcane curses
In its fist
a symbol
of agony
glows and buzzes
The barefoot mother
covers the mouth
of the infant
and gathers the others
through an exit
The rider is
on the stairs
she curses him
and he raises his hand
Take the children
to the lower floor
and cover their ears
I will fight them
she says
to which he replies
wordlessly
raising his visor
showing
his blazing eyes
In the hall
they slither and grind
as the leader cuts
a block-wall slice
The rider calls
The rider calls
The rider calls
Rolling back his eyes

A wave-tide
the leader
and his scythe
The rider is still
as the old roads
precise
as the heads roll
until
the highest rank
breathes down his neck
smiles like death
and
plunges the blade
The rider staggers back
and the leader's shape
changes
its skin folds back
and its visage ages
The rider stands
and they roar
with laughter
The rider tightens
the glaive
the beams
falter
and focus
The blade falls
in two
the leader screams
and claws at its
faces
Soon outside
the family has fled
he raises the
red
trophy

to the stars
And rides