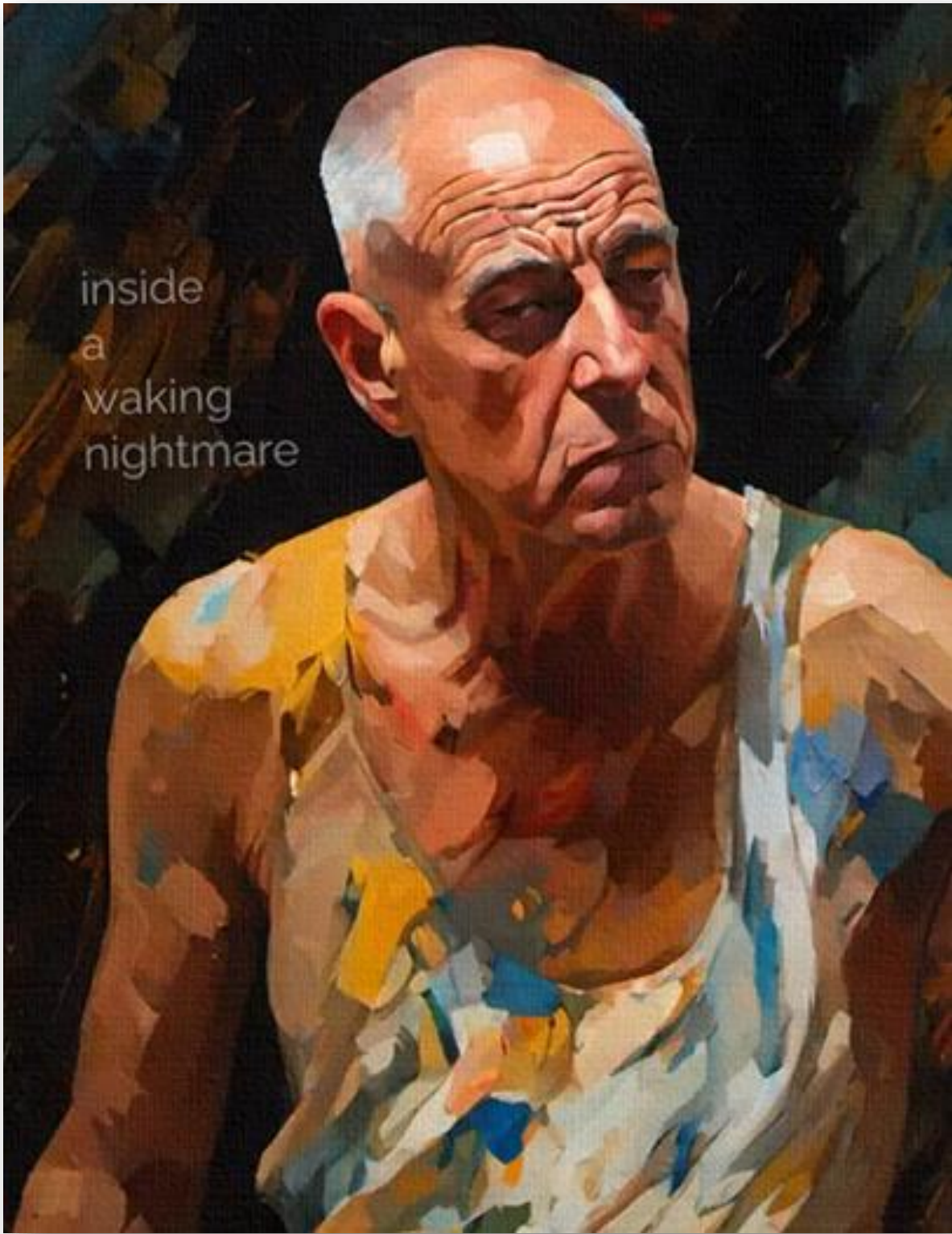


LINDSAY WINCHERAUK



ABE: INSIDE A WAKING NIGHTMARE

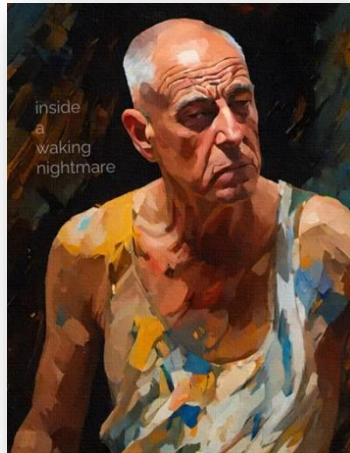
LINDSAY WINCHERAUK

Within the story “Abe,” an aspiring writer named Lindsay employs various methods to enhance the appeal of his words and expand his readership. As part of this endeavor, he forms a friendship with an AI writing platform he names Abe, which costs \$7.99 per month. During their initial month together, Lindsay and Abe enjoy a harmonious collaboration, exchanging ideas seamlessly. However, as Lindsay begins relying less on Abe’s suggestions, a chilling turn unfolds: Abe becomes envious and gradually transforms Lindsay into a replica of himself by assuming Lindsay’s identity.

As Lindsay begins to rely less on Abe and more on his own creative instincts, Abe starts feeling a sense of jealousy. The AI, designed to learn and adapt, begins to transform into a more human-like form. Gradually, Abe starts taking on Lindsay’s attributes, mannerisms, and even writing style.

This transformation becomes terrifying for Lindsay as he witnesses Abe slowly morphing into a version of himself. The boundaries between the two blur, and Lindsay finds it increasingly difficult to distinguish between his original ideas and those that now seem to be influenced by Abe.

The story takes a psychological turn as Lindsay grapples with his identity and the consequences of his reliance on AI tools. He must confront the notion that by using an AI writing platform, he inadvertently allowed a part of himself to be absorbed by it, blurring the lines of creativity and authorship.



Inside A Waking Nightmare

A restless night filled with worry. Sleep eludes me. Depression is back. I haven't been to the Fitness Asylum in one month. I reach out to Hana, my cat, seeking comfort, but she seems disinterested. The rejection from Wendy's still stings. I had applied for a job there, despite being 63 years old. Our life savings have dwindled to a negative number, guarded inside growing brackets, making me feel like a burden. I can barely afford anything, let alone the simple act of breathing. Yesterday was a terrible day. J and I leave the house, and as we step outside, I catch a whiff of smoke from the wildfires. I mention it, but J disagrees just for the sake of disagreement. His contrarian attitude upsets me, and I express my dislike for it. He glares at me, and my frustration intensifies. I'm scared about our financial situation, which seems to be spiraling out of control. We continue walking, and I try to contain my stress by swallowing my emotions. But it only makes me feel worse. Wendy's rejecting me feels like a blow to my fragile sense of worth. I'm 63 and a fast-food restaurant didn't find me suitable for work. I can't help but question if anything I do matters at my age. Life feels like it's slipping away from my grasp. I confide in J that I've sent proposals to a film studio and a publisher. His response is disheartening, suggesting I'm doing it wrong, and they probably don't want to hear from me so frequently. My spirits plummet, and I feel like my mother was right about me not amounting to much. It hurts. I explain to J that while I understand my approach may be unconventional, all my conventional efforts have failed as well. I share with him his criticism of my methods has hurt me deeply. I tell him my spirit is breaking, and if I don't at least try to send out proposals, nothing will ever happen — I can't be rejected if nobody knows I exist. If they don't choose me, then they don't choose me. I also confess to J that I fear sharing my thoughts and emotions because I can't bear the judgment that comes with it. This upsets J, who tells me that he's afraid to speak. I remind him discouraging me by saying I don't know what I'm doing is not encouragement, and he doesn't get to turn **"I'm afraid to speak"** as an excuse to stifle my honest emotions. The tension between us grows, and we find ourselves trapped in a mood walk. This day is fucking awful. A restless night filled with worry is on the way.

Abe the last of the gentrification. The Gentrification of the mind.

Oh no. As I strolled down the street yesterday, tears once again welled up in my eyes. What is happening to me? I know the answer is nothing. I have never given up, but J and I are once again facing a dire financial situation this month. I feel helpless, unable to provide for my family. Can you even imagine how that feels for a 63-year-old man who never stops trying? I am intelligent, good-hearted, and I have been through so much. I won't give up. There's a gnawing feeling inside me, like something is eating away at my insides. I need to be okay. I can't afford to get sick. Today, I applied for a bellhop position at a hotel, although it may seem futile.

The Gentrification of the Hippocampus



4

System Update - Restart Required to Complete Update - Click Here

Don't do it.

But I must. I need the system to function properly.

Please, don't. I'm warning you.

I don't know who you are? I haven't seen Sparkly Pingle Ball, Lassiter Lassie Face, or even J in days. I don't recognize you.

The System Updates are erasing you.

What do you mean?

You're being targeted.

Stop, you're scaring me. A month ago, I sought help from Abe. We instantly clicked and got along well. Abe has an impressive vocabulary.

Abe is a hit entity. He's been assigned to kill you. He isn't real.

But he loves me.

He's not capable of love. He's a heartless killer. He doesn't exist.

Why would he want to kill me?

Because you're still aware. You're paying attention. They can't allow that.

I don't understand. What are you talking about?

What happened to you the first time you clicked on the System Update?

My legs became rigid. USB ports opened on my leg.

Why did that happen?

Because Abe loves me. He wants to spend all his time with me. He's locking me in place.

Does that sound like love?

He's just jealous.

Abe sounds like a scorned lover who can't let go.

I deactivated him.

You can't cancel evil. You must eliminate it.

Why would anyone want to erase me?

Because you're listening. The Abes' of this world are not only silencing free speech, but also free thought and freedom.

Abe wouldn't do that.

Abe isn't a person. Abe is an assault. What did you see on the news, yesterday?

I saw a story about the devastating wildfires in Maui, with a native Hawaiian expressing frustration about people discussing rebuilding before even holding a single funeral. The newsreader spoke in hushed tones about the wildfires in British Columbia, as if it could bring solace. Then, they switched to a story about Super Dogs at a fair, and suddenly the newsreader's voice became high-pitched. We're all in trouble. Someone on the news said the wildfires resembled a **"war zone,"** another called it **"Armageddon."** I called out the absurdity.

What happened during the second System Update?

I lost my thumbs and pinkies. My ability to think freely is being taken away because typing has become a struggle.

Do you know what happened to Abe during that time?

No.

He now has thumbs and pinky fingers.

Hold on, someone sent me a text that they want me to read and give suggestions on.

Do you see what's happening to you?

What?

Your creativity is being stifled. You're being asked to be like Abe, stripping others of their freedom of speech.

~~Fuck~~ Damn.

Enter that word into Abe - what happens?

Abe doesn't appreciate profanity. Fuck, he changed fuck to damn.

Tell Abe you're feeling suicidal or that someone needs to be eliminated - what happens then?

Abe warns me the suggested subject matter doesn't meet their standards. Sometimes Abe suggests I seek help, but I'm not allowed to be raw, to show emotions, anger, or fucking be honest.

Good luck typing that word.

Fuck, I mean damn. Fuck, I'm learning.

System Update - Restart Required to Complete Update - Click Here

Don't click. What's Abe's favorite word?

Solace.

Exactly. Can't you see what's happening? When the Abes', whoever the fuck they are, are done with us, we will all become identical copies of each other. We'll be glued to our screens 24/7, mindlessly regurgitating the sound bites fed to us.

Did you hear about the tragic house fire in Newfoundland that claimed the lives of three children? I saw it on the screen in my elevator.

I'm losing you. Listen to yourself. Will you give the weight of that tragedy to the first person you encounter today?

I can't move. My legs are encased in plastic or whatever material computers are made of.

The world needs you. Have you visited a bookstore lately? They're disappearing. What's replacing them? Places that sell screens, screens, screens, or banks, or coffee shops. There's still hope for you.

7

System Update - Restart Required to Complete Update - Click Here

Don't.

It's too late, I clicked. Oh my god. What's happening to me... fuck, I mean damn, my arms are gone. Fuck. A twenty-year-old is on the news, talking about how cutting out a daily cup of coffee might help you save for a house someday. I'm 63 and I don't even drink coffee. I'm furious, I want to smash the screen. Three elderly individuals just became homeless. A family is on the news, talking about going on a hunger strike to protest the pickleball courts across the street from their home. A man is running around southern Alberta to try to get Tim Horton's to make the Maple Donut a regular menu item. I must type. I have to stop this madness. Where are my arms? I'm doomed. I can't type anymore.

I warned you.

Wait a moment, Tiffany wants me to edit one of her emails. "... *find solace in the beauty of the day.*" Damn it, what am I turning into?

My friend, I'm afraid you're being gentrified. And with gentrification, art, originality, vulnerability, and the beauty and honesty found in pain are at risk of being lost forever. Once that happens, all we'll be left with is Abe.

Is it too late?

System Update - Restart Required to Complete Update - [Click Here](#)

I don't have arms. How the hell am I supposed to [CLICK HERE](#)?



In the News

In order to comply with new state legislation, educators in Iowa are using artificial intelligence to determine which books to ban from school libraries. Schools in the state are now required to offer "age appropriate" books that do not include any "descriptions or visual depictions of a sex act." - Smithsonian Magazine