Melvin hated sleep. No, Melvin didn’t hate sleep, he hated the night. He saw too much of the night. Melvin loved sleep, he just couldn’t get enough. Sleep was beautiful, calm and quiet. Sleep was peaceful and rejuvenating. Sleep was wonderful. And yet, sleep was unattainable. Sleep was as far away from Melvin as it could be. Football fields seemed small compared to this gap between the two.

Now the night, Melvin hated the night. The night was always there, from dusk to dawn, always dark and always brooding. Melvin couldn’t escape the night. He lay in bed, praying for there to be only a football field between him and sleep, so that he could at least look at sleep’s beauty. But it was cosmos and galaxies and universes that separated Melvin and sleep. Not a football field in sight.

Melvin tried to count sheep. He tried to count sheep and horses and cows and pigs and chickens but the wolves ate the sheep and the horses ran away and the cows and the pigs and the chickens where slaughtered. Red splotches splattered the inside of his eyelids until he opened them to the darkness and his ceiling. His ceiling was low, painted green from all those years ago when his father took him to the store to pick up the paint. Melvin wasn’t sure but he thought that he had picked purple at first.

The ceiling was tinged with red. It seeped into the green slowly, enough so Melvin didn’t notice until it was almost covering the ceiling.

Melvin lived in a suburb. When he was 17 he left his mother and his father and went to college for accounting. A noble profession, his mother said. A wimp’s job, his father said. Melvin never came back. He moved to his suburban home that was twenty minutes from his job on a quiet street with no traffic. Many people said that it was the best place to sleep. But Melvin never seemed to sleep.

Melvin got up and went to work and normally the sheep and other animals stayed in his house. However, these days Melvin occasionally found a stray chicken roaming free in his office or heard wolves howling while his boss was talking to him. Melvin’s imagination didn’t normally effect his vision. Melvin had always had an imagination that, in his mothers opinion, was beautiful and might help him become a writer someday. Or as his father said, was distracting and would get him sent to military school. He never became a writer nor did he go to military school. No, Melvin became an accountant.

Accounting was not a particularly fun job, but Melvin didn’t hate it. It had a routine and was ordered, just like the numbers he worked with. Recently however, there have been developments that interrupt Melvin’s normal routine.

Melvin hadn’t slept in days. Long grueling days. His days were walks in the desert and over mountains, sand and hills that never ended. He went to work, he went to bed, he couldn’t sleep, he got up, he went to work again.

The desert was a beautiful place, albeit deadly. Many beautiful things were deadly. Venus fly traps and jungles. The desert was sandy and wavy and hot and golden and slippery and shiny and glimmery and sunny. The desert was sunny and it burned Melvin but Melvin kept moving towards the watering hole in the distance. A lion roared and it shuddered deep in his bones and rocked his feet and the watering hole shook and shook and shook and became a mountain.

The mountains were beautiful, though deadly. Many beautiful things were deadly. Dart frogs and spiders. The mountains were shady and woody and cool and green and wet and rough and soggy and rocky and muddy. The mountains were muddy and the mud stuck to Melvin and weighed him down but Melvin kept moving towards the stream in the distance. A lion roared.

Melvin lay in bed. His blankets were warm and the weight on top of him settled his bones but couldn’t quiet his mind. He tried to relax, every muscle in his body slackening, releasing. He tried to breathe, his lungs expanding and contracting. He tried everything he could think of but soon he slipped back into the haze that followed him, a sleepless haze that was thick and heavy.

Melvin saw the red creep across the ceiling, blood reaching its tendrils, soaking and blocking out the rest of the world. The blankets turned sticky and wet over Melvin, pouring blood into every pore of his body. The blood was hot and gross but Melvin didn’t move and the stench of iron filled his room.

Melvin saw sheep and chickens and heard horses and wolves. The stampede of tireless horses never-ending, running on the track that was his brain, they went around and around and around…

The home in the suburbs was blue, his dad helped him get the paint and Melvin could almost remember picking purple, but the house was blue, so he must have remembered wrong.

Sometimes the horses were purple. There were purple flowers and purple houses. Purple puppies and purple wolves…

Purple swirled in front of Melvin. He longed for sleep, wished for sleep, anything but the long agonizing hours that he had spent awake already and the ones that loomed ahead of him…

Football was an agonizing sport. There was running, and hitting, and throwing, and catching. It was long and the fields were long and the crowds were big but for Melvin there were no crowds, there were no footballs. Just the field and the distance between him and the other end. Melvin’s football field spanned galaxies and universes and super novas and star systems and planets and asteroid belts and cosmos and constellations and sleep was so far away but he was also standing on a cliff. The cliff was a couple feet away from another cliff, so close and taunting that Melvin almost jumped until he reached the edge and realized the gap was as big as a football field and Melvin stood teetering on the edge of a cliff--

Falling, Melvin looked up and saw a planet growing smaller in the distance, looked down and saw asteroids growing bigger- saw galaxies and universes and stars and constellations all at once and it was beautiful and beautiful and everything was purple purple purple.